

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 1995
Bangladesh...
save 15 women
from trafficker

Experts gather in Iraq for oil conference

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Representatives for Western oil companies arrived here Friday for an international conference on the future of the oil and gas markets, organisers said. About 250 Arab, European and Asian experts are due to attend the conference Saturday and Sunday in Baghdad, despite the U.N. embargo imposed on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Speakers scheduled at the seminar, the first to be hosted by Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war, include Omani Oil Minister Rashid al Barwani and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Deputy Secretary General Ramzi Salham. The gathering which will also look at production costs comes as the U.N. Security Council prepares to review on Monday the oil and trade embargo. Taha Hammoud, secretary of the Iraqi Oil Ministry, told a press conference that the seminar would also look at Iraq's future role in the world oil market once the sanctions are lifted. "The world has to be aware of the imbalance on the international market caused by Iraqi absence," he said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Husseini demands talks on Jerusalem

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official called Friday for immediate talks with Israel on the future of Jerusalem instead of waiting for next year as agreed under the autonomy accord. Faisal Husseini said: "We call for the issue of Jerusalem to be placed at the top of the agenda of the current negotiations since Israel has launched a vigorous campaign to Judaize the holy city in violation of the peace accords." He was talking to journalists as he arrived in Cairo for a conference starting Sunday under the banner, "Jerusalem: The City of Peace," organised by the Arab League. Mr. Husseini, in charge of the Jerusalem file for the Palestinian self-rule authority, was accompanied by several leading Palestinian officials and experts including the Jerusalem mufti appointed by the authority, Sheikh Ekrema Sabri. "The fact that the issue of Jerusalem is to be dealt with at talks on the final status of the occupied Palestinian territories does not mean that it cannot be mentioned during the current negotiations," he said.

Volume 19 Number 5863

AMMAN SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 1995, SHAWAL 10, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Sahaf in Doha

DOHA (AP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf arrived Friday on an unexpected visit, the first by a senior Iraqi official to a Gulf Arab country which supported Kuwait during the 1990 invasion. Mr. Sahaf was received by Qatar's foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Al Thani. But there were no statements from either officials.

Dollar rallies

LONDON (AFP) — Strong U.S. employment figures, trailing expectations that U.S. interest rates might rise, underpinned the dollar on Friday but it slipped ominously in late trading and dealers said that they expected central banks to act. In Paris dealers said that the U.S. unemployment data had not led to "a lasting rally for the dollar." A dealer at a U.S. bank there said: "The markets do not seem satisfied with the unemployment figures and the statements from U.S. officials and are now waiting for action from the authorities on interest rates." In London the dollar closed at 1.4105 marks from 1.3900 marks at the close on Thursday.

Hamas demands release of activists

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas on Friday protested a Palestinian crackdown on its militants calling for their release and the return of their arms. The call in a statement came after PLO leader Yasser Arafat met U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and assured him of "new measures" to fight violence. "Hamas calls for the release of all innocent detainees... and the return of weapons they bought with hard-earned money," the statement said citing two members of its armed group, Izzedine Al Qassam, held about 10 days ago. "Stop the arrests and security measures because they are not worthy of a people who resisted with stones."

Women protest Israeli settlements

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — About 200 Israeli and Palestinian women demonstrated here Friday against the expansion of Jewish settlements and demanded the release of 30 female Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The women, who gathered at the walls of the Old City, held banners saying "two states for two peoples" in Hebrew and Arabic. They called for the dismantling of the 144 Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state bordering Israel. Scuffles broke out when Israeli right-wingers threw punches at them and attacked a press photographer, smashing his camera. Historian Dana Jolan from Jerusalem's Hebrew University, one of the organisers of the women's protest, said it was the first in a series of street actions aimed at countering the influence of rightwingers opposed to the peace process.

rench diplomat meets amas leader in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A French diplomat has met a senior leader with the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) on Friday at the group's first contact with a Western representative. "I had a one-hour meeting on Thursday with a French vice-consul from Jerusalem, Jean-Christophe Auelle," Hamas leader Ad Faluji told AFP. The consul said Mr. Auelle met Mr. Faluji in his capacity as a journalist and not as a member of Hamas, which spearheads the armed fight against Israel and position to Palestinian autonomy. "There was no contact with Hamas," a consulate spokesman said.

King calls on Rabin to speed up peace process

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has called on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to accelerate the implementation of the Jewish state's peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), official sources said Friday.

The sources, who preferred anonymity, said the King's call came during a meeting he had with Mr. Rabin in Aqaba Thursday evening.

The Aqaba summit came ahead of a visit to Syria and Jordan by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a bid to advance the Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli track of peace negotiations amid what appeared to be a breakthrough in pushing the Israel-PLO autonomy accord forward.

Mr. Rabin flew to Aqaba after meeting Mr. Christopher in Tel Aviv and his Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat announced after a meeting on Thursday that they had set a July 1

deadline for reaching agreement on Israeli withdrawal from West Bank towns in line with the September 1993 declaration of principles that led to autonomy in Gaza and Jericho in May 1994.

The source said Mr. Rabin briefed the King on his talks with Mr. Christopher and the Peres-Arafat meeting.

Mr. Rabin told reporters after returning to occupied Jerusalem that he made the trip because he hoped Mr. Christopher could contribute to "strengthening the agreement with Jordan, and all that is connected to the American obligation to erase Jordan's debts."

Israel Radio said Mr. Christopher had assured Mr. Rabin the United States would fulfill its financial commitment to Jordan.

"Naturally, with Jordan, with whom we have a peace treaty, and a system of many understandings, I thought it was deserving to come and exchange ideas and to see how together we can work to advance the peace process," said Mr. Rabin.

Palestinian Economy Minister Ahmad Qouria

meanwhile called Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to inform of the Peres-Arafat agreement.

In Aqaba, the King and Mr. Rabin also reviewed "other issues related to the Christopher visit" to the Middle East and developments in the Jordanian-Israeli track after the two countries signed a peace treaty in October, the sources said.

"The King threw his weight behind the reality that something should be done quickly to break the stalemate in the peace process since time is running out," said one source.

"He emphasised that it is most essential that immediate measures be undertaken, otherwise the consequence of a breakdown in the Palestinian track would affect all of us," the source added.

According to the source, the King also called for speedier implementation of the provisions of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. This meant quicker moves towards concluding agreements in various sectors including trade and transport.

Negotiations on trade are proceeding at snail's pace as Israel is holding out against Jordanian demands for treatment of its imports to Israel in a manner that absorbs the huge disparity in the economies of the two countries.

A draft transport accord is almost complete and is awaiting some final touches, according to officials. This accord is expected to enable direct transport links between the two countries and allow the entry of vehicles from both sides to each other's territory.

Mr. Rabin agreed with the King of the necessity to speed up the negotiations on the various agreements and sign them even before the scheduled deadline of May 10, the sources said.

The Israeli prime minister flew aboard a military aircraft to Aqaba and the meetings were held at the Royal palace in the Red Sea port city.

The previously unannounced visit was Mr. Rabin's second to Jordan this year. He visited Amman on Jan. 12 and said after talks

(Continued on page 7)

RJ planes start using Israeli airspace

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national carrier, started using Israeli airspace on Friday for its European flights to and from Amman, officials said.

They said at least five RJ planes used Israeli airspace on their outward flights and several incoming aircraft were scheduled to fly over Israel on their way to Amman later in the day.

Under an agreement reached between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries on Feb. 21, RJ planes can fly at an average altitude of 17,000 feet for a trial period of two months. The agreement followed the signing of a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel on Oct. 26.

According to RJ officials, the airline is expected to use Israeli airspace for about 50 flights a week, most of them to European destinations

such as London, Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Vienna, Bonn and Rome.

The agreement was reached after several months of intense negotiations between Jordan and Israel.

The Israeli transport minister, Yisrael Kassar, has described the agreement as a "step that builds peace."

Nader Dahabi, president and chief executive officer of the Jordanian national carrier, has said the two sides would meet again after the two-month trial period and seek to arrive at a "comprehensive and permanent agreement on civil aviation."

"On an average, RJ would save about 16 minutes of flying time on every flight if it uses Israeli airspace. The savings could be higher if Israel allows a higher altitude than 17,000 feet, according to international aviation experts."

However, the very proximity of the Queen Alia International Airport to Israeli airspace makes 17,000 feet "a

suitable level of free ascent and descent for RJ flights," according to an expert.

The new corridor for RJ flights through Israel begins above the Dead Sea and passes near occupied Jerusalem and over Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv before entering the Mediterranean sky.

The corridor has been approved by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). RJ officials said. Air controllers of Jordan and Israel opened a direct link on Thursday.

No such "corridors" ever existed in view of the state of hostilities between Israel and the Arab states since the creation of the Jewish state.

It was not immediately known whether other airlines flying direct from European airports to Amman would use Israeli airspace or whether Israel, which maintains that high-altitude flights would interfere with its air force training flights, was ready to offer them overflight rights.

Meanwhile, informed sources said Israel and Saudi Arabia were discussing the use of Saudi airspace by Israel's El Al airlines. "The talks are in advanced stages and Israel expects an agreement with Saudi Arabia soon," said one source.

Securing overflight rights from Saudi Arabia would enable El Al to cut short its flight times to Asia and the Far East, including Bombay, Bangkok, Peking and Tokyo, by flying through Jordanian and Saudi airspace.

According to the source, Israel expects El Al to start using Saudi airspace in summer, perhaps as early as April-May.

Saudi Arabia has not publicly commented on the negotiations with Israel, but is believed to be hesitant to allow overflight rights to the Jewish state before substantial progress is made in the Syrian-Israeli track of peace talks.

Israelis lift naval siege of Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Israel's navy lifted a month-long blockade of South Lebanese ports after U.S. intervention but tension stayed high on Friday as one person was killed and at least seven injured in clashes, officials said.

Fishermen put out to sea on Friday without danger of attack, after Israeli gunboats halted their patrol of waters just off the ports of Tyre, Sidon and Sarafand, the Lebanese army said.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, referring to the end of the blockade during U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's peace tour of the Middle East, charged Israel was playing games to divert attention from its occupation of the south.

"Nothing justified this blockade, Israel imposed it just to be able to lift it again and create the illusion of having made a concession to the United States," said Mr. Hariri.

He said the United States was being reduced to "the role of fireman instead of concentrating on the crux of the problems."

"Israel lifted the sea blockade," Mr. Hariri told Reuters during an interview in Beirut. "I would like to thank Mr. Christopher for his efforts (to have the blockade lifted)."

"This is an Israeli habit, they create the problem, so we talk to the Americans, the

Americans talk to the Israelis and then they solve the problem."

"We thank the Americans and the Americans thank the Israelis and it is part of Mr. Christopher's mission to solve this problem (created) by Israel a few weeks ago," Mr. Hariri added.

The move was aimed at easing tension in South Lebanon during the U.S. envoy's Middle East tour aimed at pushing forward the peace process.

But one man was killed and seven injured Friday in shelling and a rocket attack in and on the fringes of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, security officials in the region said.

A 68-year-old man died in retaliatory shelling of Hadatha village after a guerrilla attack on a post held by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia inside the zone.

Police said six other people, all aged over 60, were injured by mortar fire from inside the zone as they made their way to the attacked SLA post in Beit Yahun.

Hizbollah guerrillas on motorbikes earlier fired rocket-propelled grenades at the post, injuring one SLA militiaman, security officials said.

Waves of Israeli fighter-bombers broke the sound barrier over South Lebanon.

U.S. tells Israel, Syria it is time to make peace

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher underlined to Israel and Syria on Friday that the time to make peace lies in the "crucial" months ahead.

"Unquestionably the next few months are a crucial period," Mr. Christopher announced before taking his message to Damascus on Sunday.

Israel has fixed 1995 as a deadline for a breakthrough with Syria, Israeli elections are slated for November 1996 and the government says it will no longer be able to make concessions as campaigning begins.

"This is a time when important decisions will have to be taken by both countries," Mr. Christopher warned upon his arrival on Thursday.

"They must accelerate the process," the envoy added. "It is a vital time to make progress. We must revitalise this process."

Mr. Christopher, who made seven Middle East shuttles in 1994 with no real progress between Israel and Syria, flies back to Israel on Monday for follow-up talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In Syria, the ruling party newspaper Al Baath predicted that the new mission "will not produce any better results than the previous ones."

"The peace efforts will not succeed unless Israel is con-

vinced that its peace and security cannot be achieved at the expense of other people's rights," the daily said.

The two sides disagree over the timing and scope of a planned Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Mr. Rabin has refused a total withdrawal from the Golan but offered a small-scale pullback over a period of 30-36 months.

However, he lifted his recent pessimism on Thursday saying: "I basically look ahead with great confidence that we'll move ahead. We are capable and we want to achieve peace with Syria."

Israeli officials have said their national elections set for 1996 have made time of the essence on the Syrian track. Talks have been hamstrung for more than three years.

Syria insists Israel commit to return all of the Heights. Israel will not detail the withdrawal it foresees until Syria sets out its terms for a future peace.

Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, also Israel's chief negotiator with Syria, said on Friday there was a chance Israeli-Syrian political and security talks suspended since December could resume. He emphasised security issues.

"The essence of the idea of the coming together of the (army) officers from both sides reflects recognition by

(Continued on page 7)



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat gestures after their meeting in Gaza on Friday (AFP U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as wirephoto)

New life is injected into self-rule talks — Christopher

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have reenergised autonomy negotiations after setting a new target date, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said here Friday.

"I am convinced that new life has been injected into negotiations," Mr. Christopher said after meeting PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"Yesterday's talks have reenergised the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and given an opportunity to move forward," the envoy told reporters at Mr. Arafat's Mediterranean seafloor offices in Gaza City.

Israel agreed Thursday for the first time to discuss army redeployment outside built-up Palestinian areas on the West Bank and set a deadline of July 1 to complete the negotiations.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres also announced a series of measures to speed up the implementation of autonomy following two hours of talks with Mr. Arafat.

However, the PLO chairman played down progress.

"The meeting was positive," the PLO leader told the faithful at midday prayers in a Gaza City mosque before seeing the U.S. secretary.

"But we didn't arrive at any concrete results concerning the two main issues: the election and the redeployment."

Mr. Peres described the accords as a breakthrough and Mr. Christopher saluted what he called the "unblocking" of the talks after months of deadlock.

Under the 1993 declaration of principles for autonomy, redeployment was due to be completed to allow elections to take place by July 13.

A senior U.S. official said Mr. Arafat concentrated on the election issue in talks with Mr. Christopher.

"His greatest single focus was the election. He wants the election to take place as soon as possible," the official stressed.

Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said: "We have made progress on every issue and the army redeploy-

ment is now a question of time."

However he added, "everything depends on the security measures taken by the PLO."

Mr. Arafat said after meeting Mr. Christopher his forces thwarted 10 "terrorist" attacks in an effort to meet Israel's terms for progress in their peace deal.

Mr. Arafat, speaking to reporters after the 90-minute meeting, said: "We succeeded in foiling 10 terrorist attempts and we arrested them and they are in jail."

"This has been conveyed to the Israelis, but nothing has been mentioned in the mass media."

Mr. Christopher said: "Chairman Arafat has assured me he has taken steps to pre-empt terror."

Mr. Christopher said both sides had gained from Thursday's agreement.

"For Palestinians that means rapid implementation of the process leading to redeployment (of Israeli

(Continued on page 7)

West Bank lawyers vote in JBA election

By Amy Anderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Voting in Jordan Bar Association (JBA) elections was uninterrupted Friday although West Bank lawyers defied an instruction from Minister of Justice Hisham Al Tal and took part in the balloting.

It was not immediately clear whether the elections would be declared null and void because of the West Bankers' participation.

At least 150 of the 236 West Bank members in the 2,700-plus strong JBA had indicated their intention to vote before Friday's voting started. It was not known how many of them actually voted before polling closed at 7 p.m.

The ruling against their participation came in line with Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988 in response to a request by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mr. Tal said last week.

In meetings with representatives of West Bank lawyers, Mr. Tal reiterated this stand and cautioned that the elections could be illegal if they took part.

The minister relayed his instructions that West Bank lawyers be removed from the JBA roster to the JBA president, Kamal Nasser, early last week. He drew rejection from Mr. Nasser, who described it as "an interference in the bar association's affairs."

Lawyers here interpret the minister's move as an effort to curtail the association's "active" campaigning against normalisation of ties with Israel in line with the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of Oct. 26.

They contend that a majority of lawyers and Jordanian

society oppose the treaty and that as a popular association, the JBA should continue to resist normalisation. The JBA has set up a special committee to "fight normalisation," and the association by-laws forbid its members from cooperating with Israeli lawyers and courts.

The government has been cautioning all professional associations, which served as political forums between 1957 and 1993 when political parties remained outlawed in Jordan, against engaging themselves in politics and to restrict themselves into their immediate responsibilities related to the professions they represent. Since Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in October 1994, professional unions and associations are feeling the pressure to back off more than ever. But, said one lawyer from one of Amman's largest law firms, "this decision has made us more politicised than ever."

Minister Tal defended his position throughout the week saying that those lawyers living in the West Bank "had lost their citizenship" when Jordan disengaged from the West Bank. "This decision was according to the law," the minister told the Jordan Times during Friday's elections, which were held at the Professional Associations Complex. "We must abide by the law and the sovereignty of the state."

"This is not in any way an interference in the union's professional work," the minister said in comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. "My decision not to allow the West Bank lawyers to participate in elections is a reassertion of Jordan's official position to lend

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan plans national panel to discuss stand on NPT

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan plans to form a national committee entrusted with discussing Jordan's position concerning the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which will come under review by the United Nations in April, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Friday.

Mr. Kabariti told the Jordan Times that the panel's task would be to present Jordan's position vis-a-vis the signing of the accord amid Arab division over the issue which is causing a diplomatic row between Israel and Egypt.

Jordan has not yet committed itself to a definite or indefinite extension of the NPT pending consultations with Arab parties and the Non-Aligned Movement, Mr. Kabariti said.

The foreign minister said that Jordan, which is a signatory to the NPT, will make its final decision after consultations with the Arab League ministers expected to meet in Cairo on March 22 to be followed by consultations with the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Kabariti said that the results of Jordan's consultations would be submitted to

His Majesty King Hussein for the final decision.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Magid visited Arab countries last month for talks aimed at reaching a joint Arab stance on signing the extension of the NPT, but Arabs remained divided in their positions towards the issue, with Egypt refusing to endorse an extension of the NPT without Israel's acceptance to join the signatories.

Also, a meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo Thursday failed to diffuse the Egyptian-Israeli conflict over the issue.

Reports from Cairo said that Mr. Christopher seemed to adopt Israel's point of view on the issue as he told reporters that comprehensive peace in the region is the cornerstone for increasing confidence building measures for parties involved in the Middle East peace process, thus supporting Israel's position concerning the signing of the NPT.

Israel says that it will only sign the NPT, a move considered by Tel Aviv to be a confidence building measure, when comprehensive peace in the region is attained.

Israel says its refusal to sign the treaty is a security-related decision as the Jewish state believes that threat from regional parties can only be eliminated when a comprehensive regional peace is attained.

Arab League experts, meeting for two days last month, failed to agree on the text of a draft treaty on eliminating weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in the hope that an Arab League draft treaty would pressure Israel into signing the NPT, which they say Israel refuses to sign for fear of having to open its installations for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Israel has never acknowledged possessing nuclear weapons, though Western experts say it has around 200 nuclear warheads.

Jordan's October 1994 peace treaty with Israel, however, commits both sides to participate in "the creation in the Middle East of a region free from weapons of mass destruction, both conventional and non-conventional, in the context of a comprehensive, lasting and stable peace ... thus eliminating the possibilities of any row over the issue with Israel."

financing this type of Islam which could turn against them," he added.

"There is an Islamic international which is seeking to impose new religious ideas," said the minister, who was beginning a five-day visit to Germany at the head of a delegation including the governors of the four biggest Algerian cities, Algiers, Annaba, Constantine and Oran.

In Paris, the FIS demanded that Belgium free a top FIS official detained last week in a round-up of suspected extremists resident there.

The FIS parliamentary delegation said it was "shocked" by reports of the arrest of Sheikh Ahmad Zaoui "as well as other political refugees by the Belgian authorities ... he (Zaoui) is one of the most important personalities in the FIS leadership."



CARBOMB: Wives of Algerian policemen and their children look at a police housing complex destroyed at dawn on Friday by a car bomb. The blast left 33 people injured (see page 12) (AFP wirephoto)

Peace process difficult, but alive — U.S. official

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

David Satterfield, director for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, stated at a gathering of the Middle East Policy Council that as the prospects for Middle East peace grow brighter, "the enemies of peace have not been silent, but they cannot and will not be allowed to succeed."

The Israel/Palestinian Authority negotiations, Mr. Satterfield said, are the core of a larger regional settlement that must encompass an independent Lebanon, an Israeli-Syrian resolution of the Golan dispute, an end to the economic boycott of Israel, and finally, "the miracle of a quiet life, a normal life" for all the peoples of the region.

He stated further that the U.S. government "offers its wholehearted support for any agreement that legitimate representatives of Israel and the Palestinians reach."

The Thursday session, opened by Council President George McGovern, also featured presentations by Arab-American Institute President James Zogby and Professor Ian Lustick of the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Zogby called for more

symmetry of risk in the peace process, noting that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority are being required to take greater risks, with less political authority or economic backing, than are Yitzhak Rabin and the Israeli government.

He noted the enormous economic and social problems in Gaza: per capita income less than half that of the West Bank and less than a tenth that of Israel, exclusion from access to water and the best arable land, massive unemployment, lack of infrastructure and of control over borders and access. The Palestinian Authority, he pointed out, can't make concessions to the Israeli side from such a position of weakness. Only when the PA can offer to its constituents an economic and political future will it have the political strength to offer the concessions that peace negotiations require.

Dr. Lustick, author of the newly published "Settled States: Disputed Lands," argued a similar position, and called for the Israeli side in the peace process to take the risk of declining publicly what many inside and outside the Israeli government grant

privately: that the final outcome of the peace process begun with the Oslo agreement will be a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and that this state will encompass all of the West Bank and Gaza with the possible exception only of East Jerusalem.

To the argument that it would be politically impossible for Mr. Rabin and his Labour government to take this position publicly, Dr. Lustick argued that in a critical situation, only the boldest measures are likely to succeed. He supported his argument by citing Charles de Gaulle's negotiations with the FLN in the early 1960s. The French president took the risk of negotiating with the resistance movement for Algeria's total independence and excluded French and French-Algerian rightists from the process entirely.

On the subject of "terrorism" and the threat it poses to the peace process, Dr. Zogby pointed out that the Hamas suicide bombers, "young men killing themselves, and killing Israelis, would choose life, families and a future if they thought that choice was open to them."

Both Dr. Zogby and Prof.

Lustick saw the issue of Israeli settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem as a negation of the Palestinian legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority and a major barrier to progress in the peace process. "Settlement thickening and expansion must end," said Dr. Lustick, "and public lands in the West Bank must be made available to Palestinians."

Stating the U.S. government position, Mr. Satterfield said that the question of settlements, like the other difficult questions that lay before the negotiators, must be worked out by the two sides themselves, and that it would not be productive for the United States to take a position in advance of the issue's resolution.

All three of the panel's participants agreed that the U.S. continued to have a major role to play in the peace process. Professor Lustick offered a metaphor that for the U.S. to disengage would be as impossible as for the sun to disengage from exerting its gravity on the earth. Everything the U.S. did, or chose not to do, had major repercussions in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and surrounding nations.

'No turning back from Algeria polls'

CAIRO (Agencies) — The presidential elections set for this year in trouble-hit Algeria will go ahead, Algerian Foreign Minister Mohammad Salah Dembri pledged in an interview.

"The holding of presidential elections is a political project from which there is no turning back and they will be held before the end of the year," he told the Saudi daily Al Ashraq Al Awsat.

The minister also said Algerian President Lamine Zeroul could meet his French counterpart Francois Mitterrand during the U.N. social development summit being held in Copenhagen.

"There is nothing preventing such a meeting now that the causes of dispute have been eliminated," Mr. Dembri said.

Franco-Algerian relations became strained last Febru-

ary when France called for a European conference on the situation in Algeria. Algerian officials condemned the call as interference in their internal affairs.

Algeria has "good relations with Paris at this stage," Mr. Dembri said.

Another Algerian minister charged that a number of foreign countries were financing Algeria's outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), without naming them. The minister-delegate in the interior ministry responsible for local authorities, Mouradine Kasdali, said in Bonn that the FIS was receiving help from "certain foreign countries that Algeria helped in the past."

"With our friends, we are seeking to develop policies that will make these countries see that they are not doing themselves a favour by

financing this type of Islam which could turn against them," he added.

"There is an Islamic international which is seeking to impose new religious ideas," said the minister, who was beginning a five-day visit to Germany at the head of a delegation including the governors of the four biggest Algerian cities, Algiers, Annaba, Constantine and Oran.

In Paris, the FIS demanded that Belgium free a top FIS official detained last week in a round-up of suspected extremists resident there.

The FIS parliamentary delegation said it was "shocked" by reports of the arrest of Sheikh Ahmad Zaoui "as well as other political refugees by the Belgian authorities ... he (Zaoui) is one of the most important personalities in the FIS leadership."

Boy bomber? or pawn in PLO-Hamas rivalry?

GAZA CITY (AFP) — At 14, Musa Ziadah is a three-year veteran of Hamas. Now he's a pawn in the rivalry between Yasser Arafat's government and the Hamas after telling police Hamas wanted him to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel.

Hamas denies trying to recruit Musa or other boys, but Palestinian officials say at least six children were in training for suicide attacks intended to derail Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace talks.

"Parents in the West fear their children will turn into drug addicts. Here, we fear they will become suicide bombers," said Musa's father, Hasham, a member of Mr. Arafat's intelligence organisation. He and Musa's uncle turned the boy in to police.

Musa, who joined the Hamas youth movement in 1992 in rebellion against his non-religious father, said he was drawn into the bombing plot by two clerics who approached him one evening

as he was sweeping up the mosque after prayers.

"They told me since we're all mortal, it's better to die a martyr," said Musa, a delicate boy with a tanned face and brown eyes. "I thought of how I would become a hero like all the others who have martyred themselves. I told them I would do it."

Since October, 56 Israelis have been killed in suicide bombings by Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad.

Most of the attackers were in their late teens or early 20s.

Musa's tale has provoked another controversy between the PLO and Hamas in Gaza.

Musa says the attack was set for Feb. 14 and involved about seven kilograms of explosives. He says he was arrested in January before he was told the target.

Gaza psychologist Eyad Sarraj said Gaza, impoverished, chaotic and emerging from 27 years of Israeli occupation, is fertile ground for people who want to re-

crut children to die for a cause.

"Our environment is an environment of despair," said Dr. Sarraj. "The act of dying is the ultimate act of control, when you time your own death and the death of other people."

Hamas says Palestinian police coerced Musa to make a false confession, and is demanding the release of two senior clerics arrested after Musa named them as his recruiters.

"The child is talking about an imaginary attack that has never been planned," said Emad Falouji, a Hamas spokesman. "We don't use children to carry out such missions."

Hamas activists repeatedly met Musa at home and at school after he was released from jail and demanded that he retract his confession. Musa said a written retraction later distributed by Hamas as his was a forgery.

He acknowledged he recounted his confession several

times in jail after being confronted with the two clerics — but says that was only because he felt guilty about getting them arrested.

At a news conference called by Palestinian police, he denied charges by Hamas that he confessed under duress.

During an interview at the Gaza City aluminium factory where his father works, Musa appeared confused and scared. Looking wistfully at children playing outside the factory, he said in a small voice: "I wish I could go out and live freely. But I'm scared they (Hamas) would hurt me."

Fearing for his safety, the older Ziadah has sent Musa to stay with relatives.

Musa said he was first drawn to Hamas by the camaraderie and promises of paradise. He became a Hamas youth leader in the Bureij refugee camp, and would entice boys to attend religious studies, offering them Hamas tapes, picture

frames and sweets.

"We also scared them by talking to them about hell," he said. "Once they were hooked, we would move to lessons in politics."

He and 15 other boys attended weekly religious studies at the grand mosque in Bureij. He says he and six others were chosen for special sessions in an upstairs room on how to sabotage Mr. Arafat's peace with Israel.

"They would teach us how to resist Israel's interrogation techniques and physical and psychological torture," he said.

The six others are under police surveillance, Palestinian intelligence officials said.

Musa says that when he asked whether he was too young, he was assured that in Lebanon, boys as young as 10 led guerrillas into battle.

Musa says he no longer wants to blow himself up. But he still supports Hamas and criticises his father for urging him to leave the group.

Moroccan king hopes to bolster ties with U.S.

RABAT (R) — Moroccan King Hassan travels to

Washington next week for talks with President Bill Clinton and senior political and business leaders which officials hope will bolster economic ties between the two countries.

"We are already in the big league as far as politics is concerned through our role with the U.S.-led alliance in the Gulf war and our contribution to the Middle East peace process," an official source said.

"We hope to make the big leap on the economic level."

The Moroccan king and his senior cabinet ministers are due in the United States on March 15, the same day Britain's Prince Charles arrives in Morocco to promote British business in the country.

The source said a series of joint venture agreements, including projects in agriculture, telecommunications and energy, were likely to be signed during the three-day

state visit to the United States.

He gave no specific details but the communications sector in Morocco is described by businessmen as offering the biggest foreign investment opportunity in the country's emerging market.

The government is planning to cede its monopoly over the growing telecommunications sector and U.S. and European operators are already lining up for a share of the business.

The visit to Washington marks a new direction for Morocco, which has traditionally looked across the Mediterranean rather than the Atlantic for strategic partnerships.

Historical ties with France and Spain as well as geographic proximity make European Union (EU) members Morocco's natural trading partners.

France remains the biggest source of foreign investment in Morocco.

Moroccan loses appeal against murder conviction

PARIS (R) — A French court on Thursday rejected an appeal by a Moroccan gardener against his conviction for the murder of a French Riviera heiress found dead with an eerie message scrawled in blood beside her.

Omar Raddad, 31, has consistently protested his innocence over the 1991 murder of Ghislaine Marchal, his 65-year-old employer, in a case that aroused huge controversy in France and Morocco about the fairness of the French legal system.

He was convicted after a trial in which the main evidence was a mysterious message in blood beside Marchal's body naming "Omar" as the killer.

The appeal court rejected arguments by Mr. Raddad's lawyers for a retrial because of alleged irregularities at the original trial, including controversial questions to the jury, and because new evidence had appeared.

"I am very disappointed for Omar Raddad who is innocent of the crime for which he was sentenced," Mr. Raddad's lawyer Jacques Verges said after the ruling. "I am also very disappointed for justice."

The scrawled words that helped to secure Mr. Raddad's conviction in February 1994 included a blatant spelling error, which was seen as curious since Marchal was a dedicated crossword puzzle buff.

"Omar m'a tué (Omar has killed me)," the crudely-drawn message read. The final word should have been "tue."

Mr. Verges, a flamboyant lawyer who has defended controversial clients including international guerrilla Carlos the Jackal and former Gestapo officer Klaus Barbie, said at the trial that the true murderer might have written the message to implicate Mr. Raddad.

Mr. Verges triggered contempt of court proceedings in the Riviera city of Nice, where the trial took place, when he blasted the verdict as a product of "racism." The charges against him were later dropped.

Mr. Verges' team argued at Thursday's appeal that the jury was given written questions about what penalty Raddad should face before he was convicted, undermining the presumption of innocence.

"This wording presumes guilt," another of Mr. Raddad's lawyers, Didier Bouthou, told the court. But the court said defence lawyers should have raised the objection at the time.

The defence also urged a new trial to hear evidence from one of Marchal's neighbours, New Zealander Patricia Clark, who wrote to Mr. Verges after the trial about a mysterious lorry which she said saw parked near her house just after the murder.

She said she saw traces of what looked like dried blood on the driver's seat and a load of lumber in the back, similar to the type of blood-stained board used to bludgeon Marchal to death.

She also found a plastic sack containing a larger screwdriver and paper towels bearing brown stains, she said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 ... "Le Prince Et La Sirène"
17:30 ... Que Le Mielheur Gagne
19:00 ... News in French
19:15 ... Fa Ute Pae Revers
19:45 ... You Bet Your Life
20:15 ... Movies, Games, and Videos
21:15 ... The Cape Rebel
22:10 ... News in English
23:59 ... Stay the Night

PRAYER TIMES

06:30 ... Fajr
08:40 ... Sunrise
11:46 ... Dhuhr
15:08 ... Asr
17:44 ... Maghreb
19:01 ... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweetfield, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.

ARMENIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Tel. 773131

ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tel. 775261

ST. EPHRAIM CHURCH

Tel. 771751

AMMAN INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

Tel. 625256

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Tel. 824328

GERMAN-SPEAKING EVANGELICAL CONGREGATION

Tel. 664195

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Tel. 654932

CHURCH OF NAZARETH

Tel. 675691

THE EVANGELICAL LOCAL CHURCH

in Amman

Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with winds northerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman ... 17/18
Aqaba ... 15/23
Deserts ... 4/18
Jordan Valley ... 10/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 27 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Hama ... 819220
Dr. Shari Abu Zayd ... 757982
Dr. Jumil Marwan ... 757982
Dr. Shabaneh Al Izzah ... 757774
Firas pharmacy ... 661912
Ferdows pharmacy ... 778336
Al Asma pharmacy ... 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy ... 636672
Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945
Smeitani pharmacy ... 637660
Najib pharmacy ... 847632

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Hama ... 819220
Dr. Shari Abu Zayd ... 757982
Dr. Jumil Marwan ... 757982
Dr. Shabaneh Al Izzah ... 757774
Firas pharmacy ... 661912
Ferdows pharmacy ... 778336
Al Asma pharmacy ... 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy ... 636672
Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945
Smeitani pharmacy ... 637660
Najib pharmacy ... 847632

ZARQA:
Dr. Rami Atallah ... 984344
Khalifeh pharmacy ... 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ... 637111
Civil Defence Department ... 661111
Civil Defence Immediate ... 630341
Rescue ... 637111, 637777
Fire Brigade ... 637101
Blood Bank ... 775121
Highway Police ... 845402
Traffic Police ... 845402
Public Security Department ... 630521
Hotel Complaints ... 603800
Price Complaints ... 661176
Water and Sewerage ... 771012
Complaints ... 897467
Amman Municipality ... 787111
Complaints ... 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ... 121
Overseas Calls ... 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ... 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs ... 661101
Jordan Television ... 773111
Radio Jordan ... 774111
Water Authority ... 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority ... 815615
Electric Power Company ... 636381
RJ Flight Information ... 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport ... 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre ... 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn ... 644281/6
Aklieh Maternity, J. Amn ... 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity ... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman ... 636140
Palestine, Shamsan ... 664171/14
Shamsan Hospital ... 669131
University Hospital ... 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital ... 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali ... 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali ... 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muasher ... 771012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh ... 775112/26
Army, Marja ... 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital ... 602240/50
Amal Hospital ... 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ... 09983323
Zarqa National Hospital ... 09983323
Ibn Sina Hospital ... 09980560
Al-Hilma Modern Hospital ... 09980732
Al-Hilma Modern Hospital ... 09980990
BUDJ:
Princess Basma Hospital ... 02725555
Greek Catholic Hospital ... 02727275
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital ... 02727100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ... 03514111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)532005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

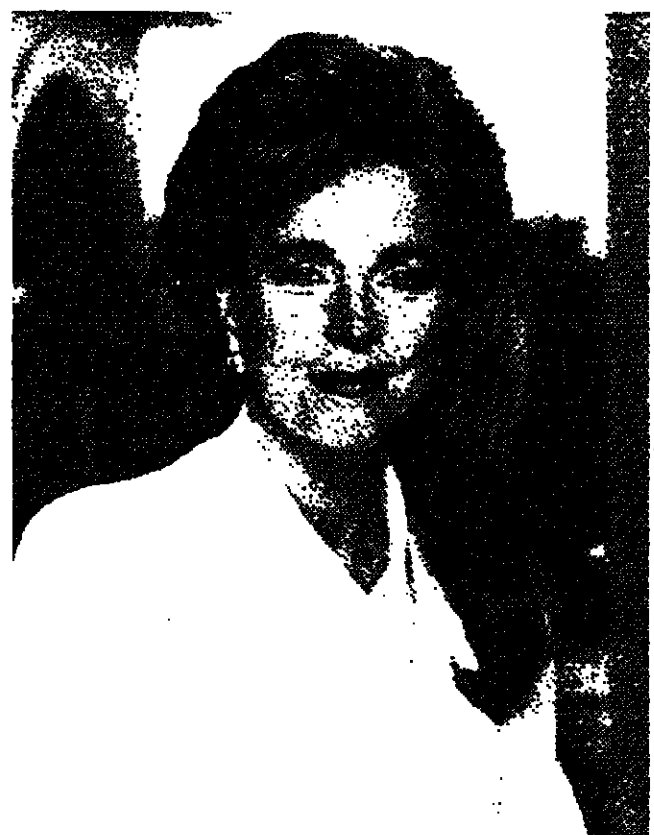
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)
06:25 ... Beirut (RJ)
07:45 ... Aqaba (RJ)
11:05 ... Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
11:40 ... Paris (RJ)
12:00 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 ... London (RJ)
12:45 ... Cairo (RJ)
13:30 ... Brussels (RJ)
13:30 ... Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
18:20 ... Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 ... Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:40 ... New Delhi (RJ)
09:40 ... Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
09:40 ... Aqaba (RJ)
18:15 ... Beirut (RJ)
18:25 ... Colombo (RJ)
18:40 ... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:45 ... Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
17:55 ... London, Berlin (RJ)
20:20 ... Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
03:15 ... London, Aqaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 ... Vienna (OS)
05:35 ... London (BA)
06:40 ... Athens (OA)
16:10 ... Rome, Damascus (AZ)
18:15 ... Dubai (EK)
19:05 ... Larnaca (CY)
21:55 ... Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:00 ... Cairo (MS)
22:45 ... London (BA)
23:05 ... Athens (OA)
23:20 ... Amsterdam (KL)

Queen chairs symposium at social development summit



Queen Noor

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor chaired a symposium entitled "Reclaiming Civil Society in the Global South" and gave the keynote address Thursday at a one-day symposium, organized by the Washington-based American University's Center for the Study of the Global South, and held at the Eighty-fifth Paktus in Copenhagen, during the World Summit for Social Development.

The symposium concentrated on the need to reclaim civil society in developing countries by strengthening institutional infrastructure, by supporting cooperation between governments and non-governmental institutions, and by involving the citizens of the south in the formulation and implementation of national policies.

The panels included "The Social Cohesion and Development," "The Social Responsibility of the Private Sector: Towards Elimination of Poverty and Unemployment," and "Women as a Force for Social Change and Integration."

The Queen is the chair of the advisory board of the Centre for the Study of the Global South.

Participating at the symposium were Juan Somavia, the chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Social Summit, and Nafis Sadik, the executive director of the United Nations Population Fund, both of whom also serve as members of the advisory board of the center.

The Queen stressed the importance of empowering women and promoting universal education to raise living standards and reduce dependence.

She added that "the rising level of education of Arab women has been one of the most profound and positive forces of change in our region."

Queen Noor emphasized the important role that non-governmental organizations play in the promotion of social development.

The "Noor-Husseini Foundation and the International Commission on Peace and Food, of which the Queen is a member, are cooperating to convene a conference on human security in the Middle East to be held in Amman to further acceleration of job creation, and regional cooperation."

Queen Noor said that "the strengths of Middle Eastern culture are rooted in its powerful family structures and its tradition of social cohesion based on religious and cultural values hence, widespread poverty and unemployment in the Middle East are not accompanied by widespread homelessness or criminal violence."

Queen Noor, accompanied by In'am Mufit, was received by Clovis Maksoud, the director of the center.

Among the prominent panel speakers at the symposium were Nitin Desai, Undersecretary-General of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development at the UN, Richard Butler, ambassador and permanent representative of Australia to the United Nations and Timothy Wirth, Undersecretary of State for global affairs in the U.S. Department of State.

Later Thursday evening, Queen Noor met with Queen Margrethe of Denmark for a private dinner at the Royal Palace to discuss the World Summit and Queen Margrethe's upcoming visit to Jordan.

Following is the full text of Queen Noor's keynote address to the symposium.

Ambassador Somavia, Mr. Maksoud

On behalf of all of us here today, I would like to thank the government of Denmark for hosting the World Summit for Social Development, and to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Somavia, for shepherding the various preparations which have made this possible.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Clovis Maksoud and to my colleagues at the "Center For the Study of the Global South" for organizing this symposium. These gatherings not only promote constructive interaction among experts on issues of concern to the south as a whole, but they also allow us to inject the south's distinctive perspectives on global issues into important international forums such as the World Social Development Summit.

Within the vast vortex of topics being discussed in Copenhagen this week, our symposium's theme of "Reclaiming Civil Society in the Global South" is both relevant and opportune for its conspicuous lack of emphasis, until recently, in development discourse, and for its profound significance for our future plans and aspirations.

It is very important that this symposium should clarify the various challenges, rights and responsibilities of civil society in the south, particularly because discussions on global change, for too long, have tended to centre on the transition from the cold war to the post-cold war era.

Many of us in the south would like to see the debate broadened well beyond the narrow parameters that were defined for us by the cold war; the achievement of the rights and hopes of the people of the south will be determined by issues and forces that transcend the confrontational doctrines and ideological polarisation of recent decades.

The preparatory documents and deliberations for this summit have accurately captured many of the problems and fears that challenge our human family. Their clear references to the growing dangers we face if current economic and social ills are not redressed must be taken as realistic and credible warnings.

The single most important historical change that we may be experiencing is the transition to a global economy and political culture — a world in which both the causes and consequences of human actions and suffering in one part of the world impact quickly and directly on people and conditions in many other parts of the world.

Awareness of this globalisation of the human condition has been increasingly reflected over the past several decades in summits and conferences that have sought to address worldwide human concerns on a worldwide basis, on issues such as children, human rights, the environment, population, social development and women.

Also, we now recognise the parallel nature of many of the problems that affect north and south alike, in social, economic, environmental and political fields. Drug abuse, environmental degradation, unemployment and poverty, urban violence, gender equity, stable governance and even national identity are issues that challenge northern and southern societies, even though their causes and consequences may be different.

The world has converged in Copenhagen this week not because some of us are vulnerable to such serious threats, but because all of us are challenged by them. This summit comes at a time when the world's fear of a third world war has been supplanted by a growing apprehension that humanity cannot survive these social menaces.

The draft declaration of the Social Development Summit elaborates many sectoral interventions and strategies required to alleviate questions of poverty, unemployment and social marginalisation. However, as we survey the global south, it is clear that too many of these goals have little chance of fruition within existing national political and socio-economic systems.

Our people are energetic and motivated; our governments are diligent and well meaning; our sense of national identity is strong and durable; and in many cases, our natural resources are adequate. And yet, something very important is missing in many of our developing countries — an essential element that could bring all these ingredients together to generate a sustainable dynamic for human and national development. That missing element is an engaged and functioning civil society — that rich and exciting space between the family and the state where individuals, associations, groups and institutions can interact with one another to promote their common good as well as the strength and social integration of their nation.

The promise of independence has not been fully achieved in most southern states; in recent years, the developmental process has stalled, or even collapsed in some due to a glaring lack of civil society structures, a prevalence of autocratic and often inefficient state political cultures, and unfair terms of trade and technology transfer with the industrialised world.

The absence of a meaningful and committed civil society network has left a wide gulf between people and their national political and developmental processes. Citizens in most countries of the south have not been involved in making national or local decisions, nor have they played an enthusiastic or important role in implementing policies. Development, too often, has become a euphemism for government handouts to passive and impotent societies.

A dynamic civil society can promote real development by offering its members opportunities to participate in local and national activities through professional associations, special interest groups, unions and cooperatives that reflect their interests, rights and aspirations.

Governments can help by decentralising authority and responsibilities, thus enabling civil society structures to reflect, mobilise and stimulate public opinion and involvement.

Citizens and their governments need to form effective, that is, two-way, partnerships for material progress and political stability. The improvement of human and social conditions throughout the south requires a dynamic civil society empowered by democratic participatory systems. Such societies enjoy credible communication between people and their governments and can tap the full power of their human and natural resources.

Effective civil society, political inclusion and sustainable social development require the empowerment of all members of society, in particular, rural women, who are among the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the world. "More than half of the poor of the world are living in rural areas and more than half are women."

As a member of the International Steering Committee on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, I urge all governments to do their utmost to formulate plans of action to address the specific needs of rural women and to ensure their active involvement in development.

Empowering women and

promoting universal education are the most efficient means to raise living standards and reduce dependence. Empowerment of women encourages a new regard for human rights and equitable social and political development. The empowerment of women cannot, however, be isolated from the empowerment of the entire community through more democratic participatory decision-making. Local communities whose members are educated and self-reliant will be able to tap their own resources and dynamism to devise appropriate strategies to assure their well-being.

My own experience in Jordan with community development projects has revealed a common denominator in all of our successful projects: an integrated strategy for women's education and training, improved access for social services, involvement in the local and national economy, and greater participation in community decision-making.

The rising level of education of Arab women has been one of the most profound and positive forces of change in our region.

Gender equity and democracy are anathema in many countries, but this successful combination has often been the difference between development that tangibly improves the quality of life of each new generation of infants, and unsustainable, inconsistent progress which relies heavily on subsidies and directives from central government.

This highlights the importance of defining development in human terms, rather than merely in economic terms.

By empowering youth, women and others in society who may have been marginalised in the decision-making process, civil society transforms them and their communal structures into energetic and effective factors of development. People and institutions evolve from passive recipients of development strategies into active instruments and initiators of development momentum.

Civil society can drive development not because it raises the value-added of monetary capital, but because it enhances the value of human capital.

In the developing world today, we are also challenged to develop empowerment strategies for our younger generations, who have been raised in societies that traditionally neither sought their views nor valued their contributions.

We must try to instill motivating new values in our youth by promoting and enabling their active participation in the developmental momentum of their communities.

(Continued on page 7)

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Prime Minister John Major is due in Jordan on Tuesday on his first visit to the Kingdom as prime minister, and his talks here are expected to focus on British-Jordanian relations as well as developments in the Middle East peace process.

Also expected to be reviewed during the prime minister's visit are preparations for the Amman economic conference scheduled to be held in October.

His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and several members of the Cabinet are expected to hold talks with Mr. Major on bilateral relations, British assistance to Jordan and overall ties between the Kingdom and the European Union, of which Britain is a member.

Britain and Jordan have maintained traditionally close relations (dating back to the founding of Jordan as an emirate in the 1920s).

King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan are regular visitors to Britain and often meet with senior British government leaders at short notice.

Mr. Major will also visit Israel and the Palestinian territories, where he is expected to meet with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who heads the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho.

John Major

Mr. Major will be accompanied by Minister of Trade Richard Needham and a large group of British businessmen under the umbrella of the Committee for Middle East Trade.

During the delegation's stay in Amman, the committee and the Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) will sign a memorandum on cooperation. The signing, scheduled to take place at the Forte Grand Hotel Tuesday evening, will be attended by Mr. Needham and his Jordanian counterpart Ali Abul Ragheb.

British diplomats describe a business delegation accompanying Mr. Major as Mr. Needham as very senior and note that their presence here would be an excellent opportunity for Jordanian businessmen to establish contacts and exchange as.

The British government as a businessman in general have taken a close interest in establishing ties with Jordan in the wake of the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

At least one group, British Middle East interest group,

has also opened a regional office in Amman. The office, which will provide data and base information to both Jordanian and British businessmen, will cover not only the Kingdom but also the Palestinian territories, Syria and Iraq.

Several British consultancy firms are involved in studies on various sectors of the Jordanian economy and resources, primarily water, as well as on the Kingdom's privatisation drive.

British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliff was quoted in the local press as saying that Mr. Major's visit to the Middle East at this point in time was a reflection of London's keen interest in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Noting that the British government wrote off \$75 million of Jordan's official debts last year, Ambassador Hinchcliff also said that "we are encouraging the private sector to take a close look at the opportunities in Jordan."

The envoy also said the British government, along with its partners in the European Union, was taking a close interest in the Amman economic conference.

"We intend to be represented at ministerial level and (to) bring a high-powered delegation from the private sector," he was quoted as saying.

Mr. Major is looking forward to hearing Jordanian views on the prospects for the conference, the ambassador said.

Britain is among the top 10 exporters to Jordan.

Major arrives Tuesday for talks on bilateral ties, Mideast peace process

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter



John Major

AMMAN — British Prime Minister John Major is due in Jordan on Tuesday on his first visit to the Kingdom as prime minister, and his talks here are expected to focus on British-Jordanian relations as well as developments in the Middle East peace process.

Also expected to be reviewed during the prime minister's visit are preparations for the Amman economic conference scheduled to be held in October.

His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and several members of the Cabinet are expected to hold talks with Mr. Major on bilateral relations, British assistance to Jordan and overall ties between the Kingdom and the European Union, of which Britain is a member.

Britain and Jordan have maintained traditionally close relations (dating back to the founding of Jordan as an emirate in the 1920s).

King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan are regular visitors to Britain and often meet with senior British government leaders at short notice.

Mr. Major will also visit Israel and the Palestinian territories, where he is expected to meet with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who heads the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho.

John Major

Mr. Major will be accompanied by Minister of Trade Richard Needham and a large group of British businessmen under the umbrella of the Committee for Middle East Trade.

During the delegation's stay in Amman, the committee and the Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) will sign a memorandum on cooperation. The signing, scheduled to take place at the Forte Grand Hotel Tuesday evening, will be attended by Mr. Needham and his Jordanian counterpart Ali Abul Ragheb.

British diplomats describe a business delegation accompanying Mr. Major as Mr. Needham as very senior and note that their presence here would be an excellent opportunity for Jordanian businessmen to establish contacts and exchange as.

The British government as a businessman in general have taken a close interest in establishing ties with Jordan in the wake of the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

At least one group, British Middle East interest group,

has also opened a regional office in Amman. The office, which will provide data and base information to both Jordanian and British businessmen, will cover not only the Kingdom but also the Palestinian territories, Syria and Iraq.

Several British consultancy firms are involved in studies on various sectors of the Jordanian economy and resources, primarily water, as well as on the Kingdom's privatisation drive.

British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliff was quoted in the local press as saying that Mr. Major's visit to the Middle East at this point in time was a reflection of London's keen interest in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Noting that the British government wrote off \$75 million of Jordan's official debts last year, Ambassador Hinchcliff also said that "we are encouraging the private sector to take a close look at the opportunities in Jordan."

The envoy also said the British government, along with its partners in the European Union, was taking a close interest in the Amman economic conference.

"We intend to be represented at ministerial level and (to) bring a high-powered delegation from the private sector," he was quoted as saying.

Mr. Major is looking forward to hearing Jordanian views on the prospects for the conference, the ambassador said.

Britain is among the top 10 exporters to Jordan.

AMMAN — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday expressed hope that the Zara-Ghor Haditha road, which was opened Thursday by His Majesty King Hussein, would contribute to encouraging investments in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba areas.

It has become easy to access the southern areas of Jordan through the Jordan Valley after the two-phase road project was completed, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Describing the roadside views as very scenic, Dr. Ensour said the road will help encourage tourism activity in the southern parts of the Jordan Valley, noting that the area's mineral water springs and coloured mountains will play a major role in attracting tourists.

In addition, continued Dr. Ensour, the road will also

serve the national development process in the Wadi Araba and the Jordan Rift Valley and will help farmers in the two areas to transport their agricultural produce to other parts of Jordan, mainly Amman.

They will save farmers significant time and effort, and thus cut on costs.

The minister said the road can be used as a substitute for the Amman-Aqaba road in case the latter was closed for any reason.

He said work on the JD 18 million project started in 1986 and stopped in 1989 when problems arose with the coalition of Turkish and Yugoslav companies which were then carrying out the project.

Thus, he said, the need to have another phase of the project arose and a local contracting company resumed work in the 32-kilometre road project in 1992.

He said the company faced a very difficult task in opening the road in areas adjacent

to the Dead Sea because of very high, rocky mountains that extend into the sea.

He said the most important part of the project was building a bridge over the Wadi Mo River. This part was done by another local company, he noted.

Describing the bridge as beautiful and suitable to the surrounding environment, he said it is a unique structure in the region, being resistant to weather conditions and the highly salty water of the Dead Sea.

He said the 40-metre-long cost JD 1.75 million project entailed also building three other bridges which were finished in the first stage, Dr. Ensour said, adding that part of the work done in them had to be repeated because of damage from rain and severe weather.

Minister urged citizens alike to preserve the road and not to litter when they are enjoying the 70-kilometre ride along the Dead Sea.

On Thursday at the opening ceremony, His Majesty King Hussein conferred upon the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order which was received by Dr. Ensour.

The King also presented gifts to representatives of the local companies which worked on the project.

The opening ceremony was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qassem, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Sour, the deputy prime ministers, several ministers, senior government and army officials, and the Saudi Arabian charge d'affaires in Amman.

The road project was financed by the Jordanian government, the Arab Economic Development Fund and the Saudi Development Fund.

AMMAN — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday expressed hope that the Zara-Ghor Haditha road, which was opened Thursday by His Majesty King Hussein, would contribute to encouraging investments in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba areas.

It has become easy to access the southern areas of Jordan through the Jordan Valley after the two-phase road project was completed, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Describing the roadside views as very scenic, Dr. Ensour said the road will help encourage tourism activity in the southern parts of the Jordan Valley, noting that the area's mineral water springs and coloured mountains will play a major role in attracting tourists.

In addition, continued Dr. Ensour, the road will also

serve the national development process in the Wadi Araba and the Jordan Rift Valley and will help farmers in the two areas to transport their agricultural produce to other parts of Jordan, mainly Amman.

They will save farmers significant time and effort, and thus cut on costs.

The minister said the road can be used as a substitute for the Amman-Aqaba road in case the latter was closed for any reason.

He said work on the JD 18 million project started in 1986 and stopped in 1989 when problems arose with the coalition of Turkish and Yugoslav companies which were then carrying out the project.

Thus, he said, the need to have another phase of the project arose and a local contracting company resumed work in the 32-kilometre road project in 1992.

He said the company faced a very difficult task in opening the road in areas adjacent

to the Dead Sea because of very high, rocky mountains that extend into the sea.

He said the most important part of the project was building a bridge over the Wadi Mo River. This part was done by another local company, he noted.

Describing the bridge as beautiful and suitable to the surrounding environment, he said it is a unique structure in the region, being resistant to weather conditions and the highly salty water of the Dead Sea.

He said the 40-metre-long cost JD 1.75 million project entailed also building three other bridges which were finished in the first stage, Dr. Ensour said, adding that part of the work done in them had to be repeated because of damage from rain and severe weather.

Minister urged citizens alike to preserve the road and not to litter when they are enjoying the 70-kilometre ride along the Dead Sea.

On Thursday at the opening ceremony, His Majesty King Hussein conferred upon the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order which was received by Dr. Ensour.

The King also presented gifts to representatives of the local companies which worked on the project.

The opening ceremony was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qassem, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Sour, the deputy prime ministers, several ministers, senior government and army officials, and the Saudi Arabian charge d'affaires in Amman.

The road project was financed by the Jordanian government, the Arab Economic Development Fund and the Saudi Development Fund.

AMMAN — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday expressed hope that the Zara-Ghor Haditha road, which was opened Thursday by His Majesty King Hussein, would contribute to encouraging investments in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba areas.

It has become easy to access the southern areas of Jordan through the Jordan Valley after the two-phase road project was completed, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Describing the roadside views as very scenic, Dr. Ensour said the road will help encourage tourism activity in the southern parts of the Jordan Valley, noting that the area's mineral water springs and coloured mountains will play a major role in attracting tourists.

In addition, continued Dr. Ensour, the road will also

serve the national development process in the Wadi Araba and the Jordan Rift Valley and will help farmers in the two areas to transport their agricultural produce to other parts of Jordan, mainly Amman.

They will save farmers significant time and effort, and thus cut on costs.

The minister said the road can be used as a substitute for the Amman-Aqaba road in case the latter was closed for any reason.

He said work on the JD 18 million project started in 1986 and stopped in 1989 when problems arose with the coalition of Turkish and Yugoslav companies which were then carrying out the project.

Thus, he said, the need to have another phase of the project arose and a local contracting company resumed work in the 32-kilometre road project in 1992.

He said the company faced a very difficult task in opening the road in areas adjacent

to the Dead Sea because of very high, rocky mountains that extend into the sea.

He said the most important part of the project was building a bridge over the Wadi Mo River. This part was done by another local company, he noted.

Describing the bridge as beautiful and suitable to the surrounding environment, he said it is a unique structure in the region, being resistant to weather conditions and the highly salty water of the Dead Sea.

He said the 40-metre-long cost JD 1.75 million project entailed also building three other bridges which were finished in the first stage, Dr. Ensour said, adding that part of the work done in them had to be repeated because of damage from rain and severe weather.

Minister urged citizens alike to preserve the road and not to litter when they are enjoying the 70-kilometre ride along the Dead Sea.

On Thursday at the opening ceremony, His Majesty King Hussein conferred upon the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order which was received by Dr. Ensour.

The King also presented gifts to representatives of the local companies which worked on the project.

The opening ceremony was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qassem, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Sour, the deputy prime ministers, several ministers, senior government and army officials, and the Saudi Arabian charge d'affaires in Amman.

The road project was financed by the Jordanian government, the Arab Economic Development Fund and the Saudi Development Fund.

AMMAN — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday expressed hope that the Zara-Ghor Haditha road, which was opened Thursday by His Majesty King Hussein, would contribute to encouraging investments in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba areas.

It has become easy to access the southern areas of Jordan through the Jordan Valley after the two-phase road project was completed, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Describing the roadside views as very scenic, Dr. Ensour said the road will help encourage tourism activity in the southern parts of the Jordan Valley, noting that the area's mineral water springs and coloured mountains will play a major role in attracting tourists.

In addition, continued Dr. Ensour, the road will also

serve the national development process in the Wadi Araba and the Jordan Rift Valley and will help farmers in the two areas to transport their agricultural produce to other parts of Jordan, mainly Amman.

They will save farmers significant time and effort, and thus cut on costs.

The minister said the road can be used as a substitute for the Amman-Aqaba road in case the latter was closed for any reason.

He said work on the JD 18 million project started in 1986 and stopped in 1989 when problems arose with the coalition of Turkish and Yugoslav companies which were then carrying out the project.

Thus, he said, the need to have another phase of the project arose and a local contracting company resumed work in the 32-kilometre road project in 1992.

He said the company faced a very difficult task in opening the road in areas adjacent

to the Dead Sea because of very high, rocky mountains that extend into the sea.

He said the most important part of the project was building a bridge over the Wadi Mo River. This part was done by another local company, he noted.

Describing the bridge as beautiful and suitable to the surrounding environment, he said it is a unique structure in the region, being resistant to weather conditions and the highly salty water of the Dead Sea.

He said the 40-metre-long cost JD 1.75 million project entailed also building three other bridges which were finished in the first stage, Dr. Ensour said, adding that part of the work done in them had to be repeated because of damage from rain and severe weather.

Minister urged citizens alike to preserve the road and not to litter when they are enjoying the 70-kilometre ride along the Dead Sea.

On Thursday at the opening ceremony, His Majesty King Hussein conferred upon the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order which was received by Dr. Ensour.

The King also presented gifts to representatives of the local companies which worked on the project.

The opening ceremony was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qassem, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Sour, the deputy prime ministers, several ministers, senior government and army officials, and the Saudi Arabian charge d'affaires in Amman.

The road project was financed by the Jordanian government, the Arab Economic Development Fund and the Saudi Development Fund.

AMMAN — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday expressed hope that the Zara-Ghor Haditha road, which was opened Thursday by His Majesty King Hussein, would contribute to encouraging investments in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba areas.

It has become easy to access the southern areas of Jordan through the Jordan Valley after the two-phase road project was completed, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Describing the roadside views as very scenic, Dr. Ensour said the road will help encourage tourism activity in the southern parts of the Jordan Valley, noting that the area's mineral water springs and coloured mountains will play a major role in attracting tourists.

In addition, continued Dr. Ensour, the road will also

serve the national development process in the Wadi Araba and the Jordan Rift Valley and will help farmers in the two areas to transport their agricultural produce to other parts of Jordan, mainly Amman.

They will save farmers significant time and effort, and thus cut on costs.

The minister said the road can be used as a substitute for the Amman-Aqaba road in case the latter was closed for any reason.

He said work on the JD 18 million project started in 1986 and stopped in 1989 when problems arose with the coalition of Turkish and Yugoslav companies which were then carrying out the project.

Thus, he said, the need to have another phase of the project arose and a local contracting company resumed work in the 32-kilometre road project

U.S. offers \$2m reward to find killers of employees

Mosque explosion kills at least 11 people in Pakistan

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — At least 11 people — including children — were killed and more than a dozen injured Friday in a bombing and machine gun attack on a Shiite Muslim mosque in eastern Karachi.

After what appeared to have been a car bomb explosion, gunmen opened fire with machine guns on the wounded and people who went to their aid, said Mubarak Haider, an eyewitness.

Most of the wounded taken to Jinnah Hospital had been shot, hospital officials said.

No one took responsibility for the attack, but it was believed to be the latest eruption of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

The death toll was expected to rise. Among the dead were several beggars who came to mosques Friday to collect alms from worshippers.

A young beggar girl known only as Selma was shot in the back as she tried to flee after the bombing, said Mr. Haider.

She was in critical condition along with dozens of other people.

At the hospital, police and paramilitary soldiers arrived to contain a growing mob. From the third and fourth floor balconies staff and patients watched the turmoil.

Some in the crowd chanted anti-American slogans and threatened to avenge the killings. It's not known whether the attack on the mosque has any links to Wednesday's killing of two U.S. government workers as they headed to

ward the U.S. consulate in Karachi. A group has been blamed for the attack.

The explosion occurred at 2:30 p.m. (09:30 GMT) just as prayers had ended, said Mr. Haider.

Mosques in Karachi have been the setting for increasingly vicious sectarian attacks that have led to dozens of deaths.

On Feb. 25 gunmen burst into two separate Shiite mosques and fired on worshippers, killing at least 20.

Karachi has been wracked by bloody sectarian and political violence that has led more than 400 people to the past three months.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her government have been overwhelmed by the violence in this southern port city and have been unable to end it.

The fighting, which involved militant religious groups as well as feuding political groups, has been worsening since Ms. Bhutto pulled the army off the streets at the end of November.

She said the police would be able to maintain law and order, but the killings have soared. Arrests are rare.

Ms. Bhutto has ordered a crackdown on militant Muslims and some people fear the stepped up violence or be linked to this crackdown.

Meanwhile the U.S. government offered a \$2 million reward Thursday for information leading to the arrest of the gunman who

killed the two U.S. consulate employees and wounded a third.

An FBI anti-terrorism team headed toward Pakistan to help search for the men who ambushed the U.S. government vehicle.

At least two gunmen with AK-47 assault rifles sprayed a white Toyota van carrying employees to the consulate when it stopped at a red light. The gunmen then sped away in their stolen taxi.

An unidentified caller in Manila claimed responsibility for the attack on behalf of the "Liberation Army." The organization is not known in Manila and it was unclear how serious the claim was.

No arrests have been made, but police have at least one strong witness: Zafikar Ahmad, a taxi driver, who had his taxi stolen at gunpoint near the Karachi Airport at 6:15 a.m. Wednesday.

The taxi, found abandoned about one mile (1.5 kilometers) from the site of the attack about an hour and a half later, is believed to be the vehicle used by the assailants.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Ahmad said two young men on a motorcycle came up to him in his taxi and threatened to shoot him if he didn't give them the keys.

Mr. Ahmad turned over his keys and the two men drove off. A third man, who was standing nearby, drove away on the motorcycle.

The two men who stole the taxi appeared to be in their 20s and both had mustaches.

Mr. Ahmad described the man with the gun as strongly built and "ferocious looking."

Americans are seen as potential targets for a host of violence-prone elements in chaotic Karachi, including drug barons, Muslim radicals and terrorists seeking revenge for last month's extradition of the man accused of masterminding the World Trade Centre in New York.

The Washington Post, quoting an unidentified senior Clinton administration official, reported Thursday that one of the Americans killed was an intelligence agent working under the diplomatic cover.

The report did not say which victim it was, but said the U.S. government does not believe this was the motive for the slayings.

Instead, the official told the newspaper, investigators believe it was a payback for the extradition of the World Trade Centre bombing suspect, Ramzi Yousef, or was related to the ethnic violence in Karachi.

Someone claiming responsibility for the attack called the Associated Press bureau in Manila, the Philippines, Thursday morning. "We killed the Americans in Karachi. We are the Liberation Army," the unidentified voice said.

Police raided a Manila apartment in January and seized bomb-making materials. They now think Mr. Yousef had been in the apartment.



An elderly woman prays before burning incense at the Ireda Memorial in Tokyo. Local survivors from the Great Tokyo Raid by U.S. B-29 bombers paid tribute to the dead, marking the 50th anniversary of the raid. The raid wiped out 270,000 houses within three hours 50 years ago (AFP photo)

Tokyo remembers 1945, U.S. bombing blitz

TOKYO (Agencies) — Tokyo residents Friday remembered the U.S. air raid that devastated the capital 50 years ago killing 100,000 people in the biggest incendiary-bomb attack on Japan during World War II.

The city observed the 50th anniversary of what became known as the Great Tokyo Air Raid with a rally, a memorial service, film shows and concerts.

"We can't stop thinking of the cruelty of the air raid as much of Tokyo was burned to ashes and 100,000 invaluable lives were lost," Tokyo Governor Shintichi Suzuki told the rally.

"Today is the day to remember true misery... the air raid will be engraved in our memory forever," Tokyo Assembly Chairman Norio Okiyama said.

Thousands of relatives of the air-raid victims, Tokyo city officials and diplomats, including U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale, attended the rally at central Hibya Park.

It was the first time a U.S. ambassador sat among relatives of victims. He was not asked to speak.

Instead of blaming the United States for what some critics call an "indiscriminate and inhumane attack," Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama said in an address delivered by a representative that Japan should first remember its own atrocities committed during World War II.

"Japan inflicted unbearable sorrow and suffering on people in Asia and other countries during the war," Mr. Murayama said in the statement. "We must repent our past."

Shortly after midnight on March 10, 1945, more than 300 U.S. B-29 bombers from the island of Saipan saturated central Tokyo, crowded with wooden houses, with incendiary bombs.

The firestorm they created killed 100,000 people. The raid was to develop into a pattern of bombing that was repeated against several Japanese cities until a more powerful weapon, the atom bomb, was used to force Japan into surrender.

Atom bombs killed

140,000 in Hiroshima on Aug. 6 and 70,000 in Nagasaki on Aug. 9.

Japan accepted unconditional surrender on Aug. 15, 1945.

Many survivors gave reporters their accounts of the Tokyo raid, but little rancor was directed at the United States.

"I hated the United States at the time," said Toshitsugu Oda, 55, whose mother was killed in the attack. "But I no longer do, because it took place in the context of a bitter war."

"We should never forget that the prosperity of Tokyo, today one of the biggest and most vibrant cities in the world, is built on the sacrifices of those who lost their lives in the air raid," Governor Suzuki said.

My 20-year-old brother was severely burned. He jumped into the Sumida River and died," Chiyoko Nakazato, 68, said after laying a wreath at the Tokyo Ireda Temple.

"I had to step over many corpses to flee to a nearby park," she quietly told reporters.

"As far as I am concerned, the Americans are still enemies. I shall never forget," said Toshie Obayashi, who lost several relatives in the overnight raid of March 9-10, 1945.

"It's true, Japan did start the war. But we were victims of the Americans," Ms. Obayashi, 74, said, her face as dry and wrinkled as parchment.

The ceremony gathered around 1,500 survivors, who responded to an appeal to mark a "Day of Peace" organized by the city authorities.

Some in the front rows shed tears in silence as they heard the Buddhist sutras. Others clutched a funeral plaque bearing the name of a dead loved one.

After Friday's Buddhist rites, 2,000 people attended the ceremony at Hibya Park.

Police move into place for Indian state polls

NEW DELHI (R) — Thousands of paramilitary police took up positions in the eastern state of Bihar Friday to ensure peaceful voting as the current round of Indian state elections moved into its final phase.

The vote in Bihar, which begins Saturday and continues on March 15 and 19, has already been postponed once because of the poor security situation.

Federal Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan warned Thursday that he would stop the vote again if things did not go smoothly Saturday.

Mr. Seshan threatened to declare the vote in Bihar null and void if it was "damaged" due to the state government's failure to deploy paramilitary police forces adequately.

Bihar will be the last of six states to hold assembly elections in February and March in what is seen as a key test for the government of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Mr. Rao's Congress Party, hit by a series of reverses in state elections last year, needs to stop the rot and produce a creditable performance to position itself for general elections due by the middle of 1996.

Up to 50 people, including a candidate, have been killed in the campaign in Bihar, a wild and populous agricultural and mining state in eastern India.

Senior local official Rajiv Kumar told the Press Trust of India (PTI) that 3,000 paramilitary police had moved into place in the Ranchi district of Bihar to ensure a trouble-free vote Saturday.

Thousands more are deployed across the state. Officials say the border between Bihar and the state of West Bengal has been sealed to prevent agitators entering during the election.

PTI quoted official sources as saying armed police and security personnel would be deployed at every polling booth in the state, and police had been ordered to "shoot on sight" at anyone trying to disrupt the vote.

Paramilitaries from the Central Reserve Police Force and border security force also moved into place to protect voting in the mountainous state of Arunachal Pradesh on the far northeast border with China, where voting also takes place Saturday.

PTI reported that up to 10,000 security personnel had been deployed in Arunachal Pradesh for the vote and Indian Air Force helicopters had helped transport personnel to the more remote parts.

PTI said that in the neighbouring state of Orissa, where the second and final day of voting took place Thursday, an angry mob had sacked two polling stations, tearing up voting papers and smashing ballot boxes.

The leftist Janata Dal is expected to retain control of both Orissa and Bihar, but with much reduced majorities.

Counting also takes place Saturday in the western state of Maharashtra, India's most industrialised area, where the state-ruling Congress Party is expected to scrape back home, and in neighbouring Gujarat, where the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is looking to take power.

American airlines introduces carry-on meals

DALLAS (R) — You heard of carry-on luggage. How about carry-on food? American Airlines, in a move to trim costs, has launched more casual "bistro" service on short flights.

Under the new service, passengers pick up their bistro or lunches from a cart set up by the boarding agent. Only first-class passengers, those who have requested special meals get meal service at their seats, the largest U.S. airline said. Spokesman

Crawley said the new service will let passengers eat before boarding and will prevent waste from meals that are eaten on board the plane.

"The shorter flights where we find the waste, said, noting passengers tend to eat meals on long routes. American said 190,000 meals a day on flights, he noted. However, Washington's nation airport were the first to offer the service on American flights of two 2½ hours. An American said the service was extended to Baltimore and New Orleans in the past two weeks. The airline said the bistro service will spread throughout most of its U.S. system this year. It said it idea for the meal service originated in Europe.

Collectors abuzz over flawed 1995 penny

HARTFORD, Connecticut (AP) — A penny saved could mean \$200 earned for a man whose discovery of double letters on a 1995 penny has sent the coin-collecting world into a tizzy. "I'm a working guy who got lucky," said Felix Dausilio, 47, a school custodian and coin collector who discovered the penny.

Coin experts say as many as 600,000 of the Philadelphia-minted pennies could be in circulation. Similar coins have sold for \$175 to \$200.

"It's a pretty exciting find," said Bill Gibbs, editor of Coin World magazine in St. Louis, Ohio, which reported the penny in its latest issue. U.S. mint officials said they have yet to see the penny and cannot confirm if it is an error or if it is a counterfeit.

The coin, displayed at an Atlanta Collecting Convention last weekend, had blurred letters in the word "liberty" and "in God." Collectors believe it might be a double die penny, one created when a die, the device used to stamp images on blank coins, has off-center impressions. When dies are made, they are pressed more than once with the mirror image of what is to appear on the coin. If the images are not precisely lined up, the letters and pictures appear more than once. Doubled dies are rare, experts say, but Mr. Dausilio's is a major find because of how clearly the overlapping letters stand out.

Killer whale calf loses fight for life

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Schoolchildren and other aquarium visitors choked back tears as newborn killer whale straggled briefly for life before dying while its mother nudged it around a pool.

"She was trying hard to get the baby to the surface, but there was never a time when the baby looked vigorous," David Huff, veterinarian at the Vancouver Aquarium said. Mr. Huff said the calf likely survived for only a few minutes. He described the mother, Bjossa, as a "very caring mom."

"They were a lot of red eyes," said John Nightingale, the aquarium's executive director. The calf's body was temporarily with its mother so she could mourn. Bjossa first calf died in 1989 at three weeks of age. Her second, 1991, survived for three months.

Taj Mahal can corrupt husbands

Zhirinovskys says

NEW DELHI (AP) — Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskys, true to his reputation for outrageous statements, called the magnificent 17th century Taj Mahal symbol of corruption. "The Taj Mahal may be a remarkable structure, but it can corrupt husbands," he said at a news conference ending a three-day visit to India.

Taj Mahal is a monument to the remains of husbands to India in corruption so that they can build their Taj Mahal for their wives," Mr. Zhirinovskys said of the monument.

Godfather Riina gets 7½ life sentence

PALERMO (R) — The mafia's captured "boss of bosses" Salvatore "the Beast" Riina has been sentenced to life imprisonment for the seventh time, court sources said Friday.

The sentence was passed late Thursday by a court in Sicily's capital Palermo where Mr. Riina, arrested in 1993 after 23 years on the run, had been on trial for four killings in the 1980s. Six other accused were also jailed for life.

The victims, one whom slain in his hospital bed in front of witnesses, were killed in a bloody war waged by Mr. Riina and his Corleone clan undisputed boss of Cosa Nostra.

All four dead were later linked to Sicilian godfather Gaetano Badalamenti, who fled abroad to escape death. He is now serving a life sentence in a U.S. prison for organizing the "pizza connection" heroin trafficking operation between Sicily and

the United States. Newspapers Friday quoted an American lawyer for Mr. Badalamenti, Larry Schoenbach, denying reports that his 71-year-old client was now willing to return to Italy to testify.

Mr. Riina and five other top mafiosi, all but one of them in captivity, were found guilty of all four murders and sentenced to life terms. A seventh defendant was found guilty of one of the murders and also sentenced to life.

Mandela is getting tough on dissent

CAPE TOWN (R) — After 10 months in power, South Africa's avuncular President Nelson Mandela is showing a steeplike side that analysts believe will reinforce the country's post-apartheid economy.

Aides say while Mr. Mandela, 76, still takes time to greet children and shake hands with all from diplomats to deliverymen, he is becoming increasingly short-tempered and hard to please.

Economists and political analysts welcomed the emerging hard edge to the man some diplomats and politicians call "Saint Nelson."

"I don't think it's just an old man getting irritable," Stellenbosch University political scientist Willie Breytenbach told Reuters Friday.

"It's the message the businesspeople and investors need to hear... It's what ordinary South Africans are crying out for."

Black political analyst Eugene Nyati said: "His new tough line is long overdue and very correct... but he is becoming quite testy and increasingly intolerant of criticism."

Trade unionists, policemen, soldiers, protesting school children and striking civil servants have felt the lash of his tongue in stern warnings against anarchy and vandalism.

Hours before he left for the U.N. World Summit on Social Development Thursday, Mr. Mandela told businessmen in Johannesburg his patience was seen as a weakness by workers and students trying to press unreasonable demands.

"I have closed that chapter. I have begged them. Now they must beg me," he said. On Wednesday Mr. Mandela warned during a whipping crackling tour of unruly black schools around Cape Town that he would no longer tolerate classroom strikes and demonstrations.

"I just want to warn you that my patience is getting exhausted. I am prepared to come down on anybody who takes advantage... to drag this country into anarchy," he said.

Opening the 1995 parliamentary session three weeks ago, Mr. Mandela said he would crack down on strike violence, dissent in the police and army and any threat to the country's stability.

"Let it be clear to all that the battle against the forces of anarchy and chaos has been joined. I don't think there is any insurmountable issue," he said.

U.S. military enters high activity era

WASHINGTON (AP) — The military's peacekeeping and humanitarian activities have expanded greatly, according to a Pentagon review that is likely to raise new concerns among Republican lawmakers about U.S. combat readiness.

Since January 1992, U.S. military forces have been involved in one combat operation in Somalia and 15 humanitarian operations, according to a senior military official who briefed reporters on the study done for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The humanitarian operations include hurricane Andrew; the Los Angeles earthquake; and providing aid to refugees in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia.

From the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 until January 1992 — when the last such study was done — the officer cited three combat operations — including the invasions of Panama and

Kuwait — and four humanitarian missions. A complete description of all the missions cited by the officer wasn't available.

The new study "found an unprecedented period of activity for the armed forces — a number of humanitarian operations, some preventive or deterrent deployments, a combat operation in Somalia," said the officer, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We recognized that we had to come to terms with the expansion of peacekeeping," said the officer, who said new military doctrine and education has been developed to help the military cope with the change.

Many in the new Republican majority in Congress have criticized the Clinton administration for embroiling the military too deeply in humanitarian operations, accusing the administration of hurting troops' ability to conduct military operations.

"There should be no mistake about what the fundamental purpose of America's armed forces are — they are to fight and win the nation's wars," the officer said. "But... we can do a lot of things with the armed forces even as they are organized, prepared, trained and equipped for that vital and most significant function, to assist in the development of the world we seek to live in peacefully."

Whether the Pentagon is able to fight and win two major regional conflicts with its pared-down force structure of 1.4 million troops is also a bone of contention between some on Capitol Hill and administration officials, who contend that they have not pared the force too severely.

The last such post-cold war study was done under the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin Powell, in 1992.

Argentina 'keen to build bridges' with U.K.

LONDON (R) — Argentina is eager to rebuild bridges with Britain after the 1982 Falklands War and joint oil exploration is an ideal way to start, Buenos Aires' new ambassador to London said Friday.

"The wounds are there but they are healing very quickly," Ambassador Rogelio Pfrter said.

"Both governments definitely have a very constructive approach to each other," he told Reuters in an interview, striking a conciliatory tone as he took up his new post.

Argentina has claimed sovereignty over the British-held Falklands, which it calls the Malvinas, for 160 years. In 1982 it invaded the South Atlantic islands, setting off war in which its forces were overpowered by British forces.

About 1,000 troops, mostly Argentine, died in the conflict. Diplomatic relations were resumed in 1990 but Buenos Aires has never give

up its sovereignty claim.

Argentine oil giant YPF and British Gas, keen to join forces on South Atlantic oil and gas exploration, have tried to break the deadlock in negotiations between London and Buenos Aires by proposing to share royalties.

Ambassador Pfrter was upbeat after the first meeting in London of technical oil experts from the two countries.

"We hope to have a cooperative agreement as to what the rules of the game will be there," he said.

"Oil is the key to the most significant resource," he said, stressing that the continuing talks are being kept purposefully low-key and are strictly technical and not political.

He considers a joint exploration agreement would be a major breakthrough. "That will be the first tangible, long-lasting agreement between Britain and Argentina since 1982. We

will have something concrete to develop. It will be significant way forward."

British Geological Survey experts say the area available for exploration is 50 per cent bigger than the North Sea and the potential for striking "black gold" is very high.

While pursuing closer trade ties with Britain, Argentine President Carlos Menem has often pledged: "Before the year 2000, the Malvinas will be Argentine again."

Ambassador Pfrter said: "It is an Argentine aspiration."

But he stressed: "We are solemnly bound to seek the restitution of the islands exclusively by peaceful means."

Argentina was angered by Britain's decision in January to extend a fishing conservation zone around the Falklands but Mr. Pfrter said he thought the matter could be smoothed given the political will. "I don't think there is any insurmountable issue," he said.

World News

U.S. presses N. Korea on nuclear accord

NEW YORK (AFP) — The United States has told North Korea it has no choice but to accept two light-water nuclear reactors to be supplied by South Korea, despite Pyongyang's threat to pull out of a nuclear deal if Washington insists on backing Seoul on this matter.

"There is no alternative," said U.S. ambassador-at-large Robert Gallucci, who negotiated the Oct. 21 agreement to provide new nuclear reactors and financial support to North Korea in exchange for Pyongyang freezing and dismantling its suspected military nuclear programme.

Mr. Gallucci's comments came after he signed a pact here Thursday with Japan and South Korea creating the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) consortium that is to provide North Korea with two, 1,000 megawatt light-water nuclear reactors at a cost of some \$4 billion.

In Seoul Friday, officials called the North's threats "predictable" and forecast that the standoff could continue for some time.

North Korea is expected to announce its objections to South Korean model reactors a few more times in the future," Yonhap News Agency quoted an unnamed senior official as saying.

In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Yohsei Kono told a press conference that he expected twists and turns before the April 21 target date for the North to accept the reactors from the KEDO.

A number of countries that had voiced interest in taking part in the project failed to sign on as expected at the U.S. mission to the United Nations in New York Thursday, diplomatic sources said.

Australia, New Zealand and Canada have agreed to contribute but their combined funds, according to diplomatic sources, would total less than \$7 million.

The KEDO discussions attracted representatives from Australia, Bahrain, Britain, Brunei, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

For months, U.S. officials had been hinting that financial support would be coming from petroleum-rich Arab nations but as of Thursday, none had signed on to KEDO.

"In broad and general terms, we are confident that we can put the financing together," Mr. Gallucci said, adding that Seoul would play a central role and Tokyo a significant one.

North Korea Friday again angrily refused to accept South Korean reactors.

"At this moment... it is our predominant premonition that an agreement on the provision of LWRs (light-water reactors) may fail to see the light of (day) and the DPRK-U.S. agreed framework may be reduced to a sheet of paper," the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

Calling its refusal to South Korean reactors "unequivocal", the agency said in a report monitored in Tokyo that the DPRK (North Korea) had not recognised and did "not want to know about" the KEDO.

"We do not want to see the nullification of the agreed framework (of the October accord with Washington) but we cannot cling to it at the expense of national interests and sovereignty," KCNA said.

North Korea had expressed interest in British or German lightwater reactors to replace the North's existing graphite-moderated reactors that U.S. military officials say could produce enough plutonium to make a half-dozen nuclear weapons.

Washington insists South Korea is footing the bulk of the bill for the \$4 billion construction project and should supply the reactors.

Mr. Gallucci said the technical, political and financial viability of the project was settled with the North Koreans before the Oct. 21 agreement.

"To say at this point that DPRK would like other terms... that is a change. We don't plan on changing the posture we adopted last year," he added.



National Assembly Speaker Hwang Nak-Ju (centre) is blocked and pushed back through his porch by opposition lawmakers, including An Dong-Seon (left), as Mr. Hwang struggles in vain to leave his home for the parliament (AFP photo)

Police may end Seoul blockade

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's opposition Friday stepped up the virtual hostage taking of two National Assembly speakers as the ruling party appeared ready to use police to end a filibuster saga.

Assembly Speaker Hwang Nak-Ju tried but failed again in a new attempt to leave his home where he has been blockaded by opposition lawmakers for five days, a witness said. The opposition launched protests to stop a controversial election law being passed.

Mr. Hwang's aides grappled with opposition members but they were pushed back. The entrance to Mr. Hwang's residence was barricaded with parked cars.

"There is no change in our position that the bill must be passed within the current assembly session," said Park Bum-Jin, a spokesman for the ruling Democratic Liberal Party (DLP).

"We cannot allow the se-

zure to continue for long," he added in a hint that force could be used.

The DLP had called a week-long special session starting last Thursday to enact controversial election law changes.

But the opposition Democratic Party (DP) started protests in an effort to force the government to drop a plan to use its majority to ram changes through the assembly.

A top-level DLP meeting decided to pass the law changes by this weekend and ordered its leaders to work out strategy to free the speaker and his deputy, DLP sources said.

Police could be used to free Mr. Hwang or Deputy Speaker Lee Han-Dong from the opposition blockade so one can preside over the assembly session, the Yonhap News Agency said.

An idea to use Mr. Hwang's residence as a temporary conference hall to vote on the law was dropped after Mr. Hwang opposed the measure.

But the DP said it had stepped up surveillance of the speakers, keeping 23 lawmakers at Mr. Hwang's residence and another 18 at Mr. Lee's house. There were also assistants and drivers.

President Kim Young-Sam, now in Europe, reportedly told the DLP to make sure no ugly scenes were seen on foreign television before his return on March 15. Mr. Hwang and Mr. Lee are also opposed to using police to end the drama, Yonhap said.

The DLP wants to change the election law before local polls in June in a way that would bar political party candidates for mid-level administrator positions.

The opposition has accused the DLP of trying to bar them from the elections because they fear a defeat in the mayoral and gubernatorial polls.

Queen Elizabeth praises courage in N. Ireland

ARMAGH, Northern Ireland (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II, visiting Northern Ireland for the first time since an IRA ceasefire, praised its divided people — and they cheered her.

The monarch who came to restore city status to Armagh, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, spoke in a relaxed atmosphere that would have been difficult to create before the Irish Republican Army ceasefire. It began on Sept. 1.

Addressing church and political leaders in an Armagh chapel, the queen said the people of Northern Ireland "have shown courage and compassion of an extraordinary kind."

"Today as they begin to look towards a more peaceful future, Armagh, with its two great cathedrals standing so close together, presents a powerful symbol of the strength, spirit and hopes of people across Northern Ireland," she said.

Attending the ceremony were the Protestant Church of Ireland primate, Archbishop Robin Eames, and the Catholic primate, Cardinal Cahal Daly.

Armagh, ecclesiastical capital for the Irish Republic and British-ruled Northern Ireland, has Catholic and Protestant cathedrals on adjacent hills. Legend has it that St. Patrick chose Armagh, 35 miles (56 kms) southwest of Belfast, as his seat in the fifth century.

The Queen is temporal head of the Anglican Church of England.

Earlier, cheering crowds greeted the queen and her husband, Prince Philip, when they arrived in Belfast at the start of their day-long visit.

Usually members of the royal family venture into Northern Ireland with no advance notice, but this visit was well publicised for days.

The queen, clad in a scarlet coat and hat, opened a £89 million (\$142 million) road and rail bridge over the River Lagan in Belfast.

To avoid embarrassing the queen, members of the Belfast City Council, who included 10 members of Sinn Fein, the political party that supports the IRA, were not invited to the bridge opening.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams dismissed the visit as "very such a local thing."

"I would not even be that concerned — Mrs. Windsor can come and go as she wants, our people will deal with that at the appropriate level," Mr. Adams said.

New Greek president sworn in

ATHENS (R) — Costis Stephanopoulos, a well-respected but little-known politician, was sworn in as Greece's new state president Friday to succeed the legendary figure of veteran Constantine Karamanlis.

Byzantine chants rang out and a military colour-guard in Macedonian fighting dress stood by as Archbishop Seraphim of Greece oversaw the ceremony at the central parliament.

Mr. Stephanopoulos, 68, succeeds Mr. Karamanlis, 88, a legend who towered over the Greek political scene for more than half a century.

Mr. Karamanlis flew home from self-imposed exile in Paris in 1974 to oversee the restoration of democracy after a military junta fell. He guided Greece into the European Union in 1981.

First elected deputy in 1935, he served for 14 years as prime minister and 10 as president. He was elected to parliament 12 times.

He told Mr. Stephanopoulos during the handover ceremony: "Your virtues and your long political experience will help you fulfil the mission you begin today."

Mr. Stephanopoulos returned the compliment, saying the Greek people "appreciated what you have done for the nation," especially for the economy and the establishment of democracy.

Mr. Karamanlis' five-year term was to end in May but he stood down early after parliament elected Mr. Stephanopoulos.

Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu made no effort to conceal his support for Mr. Stephanopoulos to avoid national elections and ensure his Socialist served their full four-year term to 1997.

The new president, the fifth since democracy was restored, is respected across the political spectrum for his integrity and candour.

He is expected to be more outspoken on foreign and domestic issues than his predecessors, and to use his office to press for greater integrity in Greek politics.

Nigeria arrests 29 soldiers, civilians over coup plot

LAGOS (AFP) — The Nigerian military government has arrested 29 military officers and civilians in connection with a foiled coup plot to overthrow it, the armed forces chief-of-staff said Friday.

General Abdul Salam Abu Bakar gave a press conference here and for the first time confirmed media reports that soldiers had been arrested in connection with a planned coup against General Sani Abacha's junta.

"From the interim report which I have received, I'm now in the position to confirm that some military officers and civilians had ganged up to organise a coup d'etat against the federal military government," he said.

"The coup was planned for the 1st of March," he added.

Press reports said Monday that between 150 and 260 officers had been arrested after the uncovering of a plot to stage a coup on the night of March 1 during the Eid Al-Fitr, the celebration marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Officials at first said there was no coup plot and denied that arrests had been made, but then admitted to launching a probe within the army to find out who was responsible for rumour-mongering that had led to alleged dissatisfaction in the services.

In a separate development, police arrested retired General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua overnight Wednesday at his official residence in the federal capital Abuja.

Gen. Yar'Adua was the number two in former military leader General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime from 1976-1979.

Dudayev asks U.S., Germany to intervene

3 months on, Russian army stumbles in Chechen quagmire

SHALI, Russia (Agencies) — Three months after they marched into the breakaway Republic of Chechnya, Russian troops are still locked in fighting with secessionist forces loyal to President Dzhokhar Dudayev, who is calling on the mainly-Muslim republic to wage a "holy war."

In the weeks since the Russian tanks rolled into the small Caucasus republic last Dec. 11, Moscow's forces have managed only slow progress and then only at the cost of high-intensity bombing that has devastated the territory's main towns.

The enormous Russian war machine of thousands of armoured tanks and tens of thousands of men sent by Moscow to "restore order" has in those weeks and months succeeded only in taking one major town.

Even there, in a city flattened by the barrage of bombs and shells poured down by Russian artillery and air power, the victory has not proved total.

Handfuls of Chechen fighters still feel free to harass and kill the Russian soldiers, entering the town at night in small commando units — attacking the Russian troops occasionally destroying one of their armoured cars.

In the rest of the republic, the Russian's problems are worse.

As if to demonstrate their continuing difficulties, Russian troops last weekend failed in separate bids to take the key eastern village of Dzhalka, a vital point on the road between Argun and Gudermes, and the western towns of Achkhoy-Martan and tiny Bamut.

Slow as it is, and if the massive troop superiority makes the Russian advance seem unstoppable, the often ill-trained troops have not yet overcome the fierce resistance put up by the Chechen separatists.

While rebel support among the Chechen civilians is not universal, the separatist authorities loyal to Mr. Dudayev, the renegade former Soviet Air Force general who declared the republic independent three years ago, on Thursday showed they were willing to prolong the war calling a "general mobilisation" in the "holy war."

Called by Mr. Dudayev to the town of Shali, the Congress of Chechen People agreed, Thursday, to place the once scarcely religious republic under Islamic Sharia Law and give religious authorities a greater say in the running of its social affairs, notably in education.

The Congress, a group of around 100 "elders" and religious leaders gathered in the town's central mosque, called on each town and village across the republic to provide men and resources for the fight against the Russian "aggressor."

If Chechen officials admit that the general mobilisation will probably not be strictly observed, they say it is important nonetheless as an expression of intent which each village can observe as it chooses.

The declaration of the fighting, made official by Islamic elders in village of Avturi, some seven

But by mid-morning sources at the Chechen separatist military command in Shali said there had been no unusual Russian troop movement towards Argun.

Shells slammed into the town at the rate of every five to 10 seconds for an hour early Friday before tapering off. The attack could be heard in Shali 15 kilometres to the south.

Argun also lies 15 kilometres east of the Chechen capital.

Russian forces have unleashed artillery barrages on the town for the last three months without actually launching a true offensive to capture Argun.

Mr. Dudayev appealed to "world leaders and especially the United States and Germany" to intervene to stop Russia's bloody bid to put down the region's bid for independence.

In a commentary published in the Washington Post Friday, Mr. Dudayev said 30,000 innocent civilians, both Russians and Chechens, have been killed and 500,000 made homeless in the 12-week war in Chechnya.

"To stop this terrible bloodshed, we call upon the leaders of the world's democracies, especially the United States and Germany, to intervene," he wrote.

Mr. Dudayev said his government was willing to negotiate a mutually beneficial relationship with Moscow, but Russia had been unwilling and obstructive.

He said the "real issue" in Russia's bid to quell the Chechen drive for independence was oil.

kilometres (five miles) east of Shali Wednesday, could be even more significant bringing the prospect of support from other Islamic authorities in and beyond the Caucasus.

And the elders ordered each family to send one man to fight, changing the context of a dispute in which the Chechen fighters were to date mostly volunteers who took up readily-available arms on the arrival of the Russian soldiers.

Now arming themselves more for a guerrilla war than a battlefield confrontation, the Chechens have at last admitted, implicitly if not officially, that the Russians will over the next few weeks or months likely take control of the remaining key towns — Argun, Shali, Achkhoy-Martan and Gudermes.

"But when they have taken the towns, the war will only have just begun," a Chechen military commander said recently.

After the Russian bombing and the Chechen resistance in the towns, the Chechens are now preparing for a long third phase of the war — the retreat into the mountains in the south. From there, they say, they intend to win.

Russian forces Friday pounded the strategically important town of Argun with the fiercest artillery barrage yet since they took up position nearby three months ago.

Russian troops have generally pounded Chechen separatist positions with major shelling before launching offensives to try to seize such zones.

Bosnia's Croats, Muslims agree integration moves

BONN (R) — The two leaders of Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation said Friday they had agreed to take concrete steps to set up joint institutions and deeper political cooperation.

Kresimir Zubak, the Croat president of the federation and his Muslim deputy Ejup Ganic, agreed to strengthen the federation's government, assemble a mixed army and set up local councils and a common court system.

Speaking after talks in Bonn, they said most of the planned measures would come into effect by April 15.

"We aim to implement the federation's constitution and the agreements accompanying it as quickly and as fully as possible. There is no alternative to the federation for us," they said in a joint declaration.

The year-old federation pact brought to a halt Muslim-Croat fighting in the Bosnian war but has until now produced little in the way of joint institutions or cooperation.

The declaration said all cantons of the federation that had not been established yet would be formed by April 15. It also contained the pledge to create armed forces free of religious or national discrimination.

The federation would also by April 15 present a plan for the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled the fighting, the declaration said.

It added that a road linking the towns of Doljazi and Doboj would be patrolled by cantonal police from April 1 to ensure the free movement of people and goods along the road.

In addition, the federation's government and ministries would rapidly be furnished with the funds and staff they needed, the declaration said.

"The federation's government structures must be built up," it said.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, host of the talks, told reporters: "I hope that we have come an important step closer towards an overall peaceful solution."

He urged Mr. Ganic and Mr. Zubak to fulfil their pledges.

The federation last Monday formed a military bloc with a joint command against separatist Serbs holding large swathes of both countries.

But Ganic said the federation would remain open to the Bosnian Serbs.

"We will also offer the concept of federation to the Serbs and tell them that they can live without a greater Serbia," he said. "Our borders will always be open."

Meanwhile, the U.N. relief agency cut food aid Thursday

to more than 100,000 needy Croatian Serbs and to rebel Bosnian Muslims because their leaders are obstructing efforts to feed hungry north-west Bosnia.

The assertive move by the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees came after months in which military forces opposed to the Bosnian government have permitted only a trickle of food into the government-held Bihać area.

"The decision to cut aid was not easily brought, but the continued blockade by Croatia's Serbs to the desperately needy in Bihać left us no other choice," said UNHCR spokeswoman Alekisa Lisinski at headquarters in Zagreb.

About 200,000 people are surrounded in government-held territory in northwest Bosnia. Croatian Serbs control access from the north and west, and are allied with rebel Muslims under warlord Fikret Abdic, who control the north part of the Bihać pocket.

Access from the south and east is controlled by Bosnian Serbs.

The main access roads for food aid from warehouses in Zagreb, about 75 kilometres (45 miles) to the north, go through territory controlled by the Croatian Serbs and Abdic's forces.

Even under a four-month ceasefire agreement in effect until May 1, the Bihać area has been the site of regular fighting. Bosnian radio reported more fighting Thursday, and said Croatian Serb shelling had wounded a large number of civilians. U.N. officials, whose access is severely restricted, could not confirm the reports.

Aid officials have warned that there is a threat of starvation in the Bihać area because of the lack of food reaching it. Since May 1994, only 20 per cent of the necessary food has reached the Bihać area, Ms. Lisinski said.

She said the leader of Croatian Serbs, Milan Martić, would be informed of the decision in his headquarters in Knin, about 200 kilometres (125 miles) south of Zagreb.

The cutoff applies to all of the roughly one-third of Croatia under Serb control, even areas far from the Bihać frontline. Ms. Lisinski said UNHCR cares for about 110,000 people, most of them refugees, in those areas.

UNHCR normally tries to provide 1,300 metric tons of food per month, she said.

Ms. Lisinski said that Bosnian Muslims living in land controlled by Mr. Abdic in the northwest tip of Bosnia also would be cut off. The number of people there is unclear, but is thought to be 20,000-30,000.

Chirac gains while ethics questions plague Balladur

PARIS (Agencies) — Jacques Chirac gained important endorsements Thursday for his surging presidential campaign while the former runner, Premier Edouard Balladur, tumbled further behind amid accusations of ethical lapses.

A group of 22 parliament members, from centre-right parties that form a key portion of Mr. Balladur's support, said they were backing Mr. Chirac, the conservative mayor of Paris, in the race to succeed President Francois Mitterrand in May.

The legislators had hoped someone from their own coalition, the Union for French Democracy (UDF), would run. But former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and former Premier Raymond Barre decided within the past week not to enter the race.

The legislators, splitting from UDF colleagues who back Mr. Balladur, said only Mr. Chirac had the "will and the pugnacity" to lead France effectively. His ideas for combatting unemployment were bolder than Mr. Balladur's they said.

A Louis Harris poll released Thursday showed Mr. Chirac winning a two-man runoff against Mr. Balladur 60 per cent to 40, a reversal of the results two months ago. But Mr. Chirac is more likely to face Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin in the May 7 runoff, and would win 56-44, the poll indicated.

In the multiple-candidate first round April 23, Mr. Chirac would lead with 26 per cent, followed by Mr. Jospin with 22 per cent and Mr. Balladur with 19 per cent, down from 29 per cent a month earlier.

Louis Harris said many of the 1,010 surveyed voters felt Mr. Balladur didn't care about the problems of ordinary people and had mishandled a scandal involving illegal wiretapping in a political corruption case.

The survey was conducted Monday, just before Mr. Balladur confirmed press revelations that he made 100,000 francs (\$20,000) a month in consulting fees from his former company while a member of parliament from 1988-93.

Though the payments apparently were not illegal, Mr. Balladur's political foes nonetheless accused him of a grave ethical lapse.

"It's unacceptable that parliament members can serve as consultants when we well know that most of the time

these services are fictitious," said Martin Malvy, Socialist leader in the National Assembly.

Claude Estier, a Socialist senator and campaign aide to Mr. Jospin, said it was "completely shocking" that Mr. Balladur earned such sums while in parliament and had not disclosed them earlier.

Mr. Balladur, who previously had balked at disclosing details of his personal finances, said Wednesday he would make such a disclosure "in the coming days."

His spokesman, Budget Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, said it had become the "priority" of the campaign to besmirch Mr. Balladur.

In a curious twist to the campaign, Mr. Chirac this week picked up the support of two well-known Mitterrand loyalists — former Paris opera chief Pierre Berge and the president's nephew, TV announcer Frederic Mitterrand.

Meanwhile, an influential figure on the French right called Friday for the first time for Mr. Balladur to withdraw from the French presidential race, amid a slump in his opinion poll score.

The call by Pierre Mazeaud, head of the legal commission in the French

American... introduces... carry-on...
DALLAS...
Killer...
Taj Mahal...
Zhirinovsky...

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
 مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية
 Chairman of the Board of Directors: MAHMOUD AL KAYED
 Director General: MOHAMMAD AMAD
 Editor-in-Chief: GEORGE S. HAWATMEH
 Editorial and advertising offices: Jordan Press Foundation, University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
 Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
 Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
 Facsimile: 696183
 The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
 Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

When warmth is dangerous

DEATHS FROM carbon monoxide poisoning have been a sad feature of life during the winter season. Most of them were mainly due to the reliance of the majority of our people on kerosene stoves for heating. Central heating and other forms of modern heating systems are simply unaffordable to the greater number of Jordanians. In the process, inhalation of dangerous fumes goes on in most of those households which depend on traditional forms of heating in cold weather. The problem came to light once again several days ago when a 75-year-old man and his 20-year-old mentally ill daughter were found dead in Zarka of carbon monoxide poisoning.

We believe that the concerned authorities should not accept these accidents as unavoidable. The fact that the victims are mostly poor people should not absolve the government from its responsibility to educate better the people about the safe use of kerosene or even gas heaters by conducting a concerted campaign to that end. Until an affordable heating system is found and made available to the less fortunate among us, users of the hazardous methods of heating are entitled to better knowledge on how to stay alive while keeping warm.

One way of handling the problem is to make it compulsory to properly install hazardous heaters by including suitable ventilation systems in place. We have laws on almost everything. Why not enact rules and regulations on this issue as well? Vendors of such kinds of heaters could be obligated by law to install these heaters in a proper way as a precondition for sale. A built-in mechanism for safe ventilation could also be manufactured as part and parcel of the old fashioned heating equipment. Violators would be penalised, but chiefly as a way to instil concern and precaution in the minds of the end users. Otherwise many people would go on losing their lives and the lives of their loved ones unnecessarily and cheaply.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ARAB-Israeli foreign ministers' meeting in Amman this (last) week exposed Israel's real intentions to the whole world when the Israeli foreign minister voiced his government's adamant stand with regard to the repatriation of the displaced Palestinians, said Mahmoud Rimawi in Al Ra'i daily. Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti used diplomatic terms like modest achievement to describe the outcome of the four-party meeting, but that does not negate the fact that the meeting was a total failure, thanks to Israel's intransigence. In Shimon Peres's view, the return of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to their homeland would create confusion and danger to the peace process, said the writer. He said Israel is telling the Arab parties that the continued displacement of Palestinians and their settlement in the neighbouring Arab countries is the only way to ensure security for the Jewish state. Israel is clearly trying to avoid any discussion with Arabs over the implementation of U.N. resolutions, which gave the Palestinians the right to return to their homelands occupied since 1967, while the Arab parties are agreed on a joint stand and determined bid to see these resolutions implemented, continued the writer. The communiqué issued at the end of the one-day meeting has reflected the ministers' failure to settle the issue despite the creation of follow up committees which according to the writer, are not expected to achieve progress towards softening Israel's stand.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dastour discussed the current tour of the Middle East by the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, expressing the view that this tour was bound to achieve nothing like the other previous visits he made to the region. Saleh Qallab recalled that Mr. Christopher has already made eight visits trying to achieve progress on the Israeli-Syrian track but has failed to achieve any progress. This time, Mr. Christopher is bound to encounter an Israeli government that is adamant in rejecting the implementation of U.N. resolutions and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Golan as well as Arab demands that it sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to improve the peace climate, said the writer. With its open-biased attitude towards the Jewish state, Washington and its envoys can only mean bring about a final and comprehensive settlement on all tracks, continued the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Israel delivers yet another blow to peace process

IT IS an understatement that last week's Arab-Israeli meeting in Amman on the fate of the displaced Palestinians was disappointing. The Israeli posture at the gathering with Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians was a serious blow to the entire peace process, given that the return of Palestinians in the diaspora, whether displaced, expelled or refugees, is one of the basic pillars of an equitable Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli foreign minister who represented his country at the Amman meeting, philosophised in his public comments on the issue with little substance. In the closed session that followed, he stuck to his guns that Israel was not even ready to acknowledge that the displaced have the right to return home and that the West Bank and Gaza Strip did not have the needed infrastructure to accommodate returning Palestinians. He refused to budge from a position that was essentially based on a premise that the problem of the displaced was simply a humanitarian one as if the Palestinians were forced out of their homes as a result of Arab-Israeli wars had now political rights and the right to go back and settle down to start a new life in their own homeland.

Again, appearing before the press after the meeting, Mr. Peres said his country was not questioning the right of the Palestinians to return but that it had to be in an "orderly" fashion. If indeed Israel is willing to accept that the displaced Palestinians, then what was stopping Mr. Peres from acknowledging that Israel would allow the displaced to return home, but in a phased process?

No one is pressing Israel allow the hundreds of thousands of displaced in Jordan and elsewhere to cross the bridge and enter the West Bank and Gaza Strip since it is clear that such a sudden movement of people would only lead to socio-economic chaos in the territories. Indeed we need a carefully drawn-up process that takes into consideration all factors and elements with a view to preempting problems.

But that should not mean that Israel should hide behind such an excuse to bluntly undermine the Arabs' faith that the peace process would address the plight of the Palestinians who are denied entry to their homeland. After all, the very essence of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations is to ensure that the Palestinians enjoy their full legitimate rights as enshrined in international law and United Nations resolutions.

Jordan, which accommodates the largest segment of Palestinians, was hoping that the Amman meeting would produce a firm Israeli commitment to honour the rights of return of the Palestinians. Such a commitment would have sent a strong positive signal to the Palestinians themselves that regardless of the troubled implementation of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation declaration of principles they could look forward to going home.

Of course we are aware that the very term "right of return" in whatever context except Jews is anathema to Israel. But then, recognising the State of Israel was also anathema to the Arabs but they still did it in good faith that the Jewish state was indeed seriously and honestly interested in finding a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

Thanks but no thanks to Israel for its magnanimous acceptance that the problem of displaced is a humanitarian one. What we are discussing here is not charity, but one of the basic rights of the people driven out of their homes for no fault of their own by a power which sought territorial expansion. So let Israel fool no-one by its sudden interest in philanthropy and humanitarian sympathy for the displaced Palestinians since the sentiment is a cover for its refusal to accept one of the basic principles of the process.

By insisting on its own version of a solution regardless of Arab good faith and hopes that an end to the conflict is in sight, Israel is not only undermining the peace process but also fuelling Arab frustration that does not bode well for the security and stability of the region.

NATO misses its old enemy

By Jonathan Clayton
 Reuters

BRUSSELS — "We are going to do something terrible to you, we are going to take away your enemy," the aide to former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is reported to have told U.S. negotiators near the end of the cold war. He may have been joking, but few surveying today's confusion at NATO's headquarters in Brussels would be tempted to disagree.

Victory over its vanished foe, the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, has presented the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with a huge identity crisis as it casts around for a role in the post-cold war world.

"One moment it is out-of-area crisis control, then enlargement, then suddenly Mediterranean dialogue, the danger of extremists and weapons proliferation. Oh for the good old days of Soviet threat," said one NATO source, only half in jest.

The sense of lack of direction has recently been exacerbated by a corruption scandal swirling around NATO's Belgian Secretary General Willy Claes who faces mounting pressure to resign after only five months on the job.

The planners who once laboured over cold war doctrines such as flexible response and mutual assured destruction are now asking whether the most successful military alliance ever constructed has a future in a world without the reason for its creation.

NATO politicians are unanimous it does, but divided as to what it is.

"NATO's core purpose of collective security remains, but new goals and programmes have been added," Richard Holbrooke, U.S. assistant secretary of State for Euro-



pean affairs wrote in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs magazine.

He cited collective crisis management, out-of-area force projection, and the encouragement of stability to the east through programmes such as NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative as all new areas for alliance activity.

"Designed decades ago to counter a single, clearly defined threat, NATO is only just beginning a historic transformation," he wrote, adding NATO would remain the central pillar of any new security arrangement in Europe.

Western defence analysts say NATO's most important role today is to stop the United States withdrawing from Europe.

"Keeping America happy and engaged is the name of the game, and that can only be done through NATO, the U.S. will only participate in the construction of a new security order through NATO," said one

independent analyst.

He added that after a near-disastrous foray into peace enforcement in support of U.N. operations in former Yugoslavia, NATO had now settled on the issue of enlargement as its main contribution to an emerging new European security architecture.

NATO's role in enforcing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and inflicting air strikes for violations of heavy weapons zones and U.N.-designated safe havens triggered one of the worst trans-Atlantic disputes in alliance history.

U.S. politicians, arguing NATO's credibility was being dragged down to the level of that of the United Nations, wanted tough action against Serb gunners.

But Britain, France and the U.N., worried about reprisals against peacekeepers on the ground, were more conciliatory.

Before the wounds from that row had healed,

NATO announced it was setting up a study on how to enlarge eastwards and take in new members from the former Warsaw Pact, notably Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

The U.S.-led initiative drew groins of disapproval from Moscow and raised eyebrows among the allies who argued the PFP initiative had barely had time to bear fruit.

"Enlargement has been out on the fast track, we are no longer an alliance to fight an enemy and in that case the only credible role for NATO is that it contribute towards extending security," said one alliance official.

Independent analysts concur that NATO's most important new role is as the chief architect of a new security order in Europe, but many question whether NATO is right to open the door to just a handful of Eastern states while keeping others out.

Violence growing in Pakistan

By Alistair Lyon
 Reuters

KARACHI — The killing of two Americans in Karachi adds a new twist to violence sapping Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's bid to portray Pakistan as a moderate, Islamic nation open to Western investment.

The government has sworn to track down those behind the attack, which killed two U.S. consulate employees and wounded a third, but it has had little success in curbing violence that cost over 800 lives in Karachi in 1994 and 287 so far this year.

The morning rush-hour ambush was a rare attack on Americans, who, like other foreigners, have been largely spared in the blood-letting in Karachi and other parts of Pakistan.

It occurred at a sensitive moment for Ms. Bhutto, who is due in Washington in April to try to promote efforts by Pakistan and the United States to put their nuclear dispute aside and build a new relationship based on economic ties.

Last year, Pakistan signed understandings with U.S. companies for deals worth \$6.5 billion, mainly in the energy sector, but few of these have firmed into contracts.

"If the law and order situation does not improve, it would be very difficult to get foreign investors, particularly major ones, to actually invest their money," former Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi told reporters in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Ms. Bhutto, an Oxford graduate, has used her status as a woman prime minister to foster an image of Pakistan as an outward-looking, stable democracy.

But those of her countrymen who share this vision are appalled by what they see as Pakistan's slide into anarchy, with corruption, drug trafficking and ethnic, sectarian and tribal feuds threatening to overwhelm decaying state institutions.

"Pakistan is reaping the harvest of hatred sown by dictatorship," said Fatheyab Ali Khan, once spokesman for the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, a political alliance which opposed former military ruler Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq.

"Dictatorship was blindly supported by the West which did not realise the repercussions."

Many Pakistani analysts trace today's seething conflicts that pit Sindhis against Mohajirs in Karachi and militant Shi'ite Muslims against radical Sunni Muslims in Karachi and Punjab province to Zia's rule in the 1980s.

Riding religious sentiment, he introduced strict Islamic legislation, including blasphemy law, and encouraged Koranic schools to make Pakistan a springboard for Islamic revival.

At the same time, the United States and other Western countries were pouring guns and money

through Pakistan to Afghan mujahedeen guerrillas fighting Soviet occupation.

Many weapons were diverted to the arsenals of Pakistani politicians, criminals and drug-dealers, enabling local militias and private armies to outgun badly-equipped, corrupt police.

A turbulent form of democracy has replaced military rule, but today's government and opposition are locked in a power struggle in which Pakistan's plight often seems ignored.

"The breakdown in law and order is a reflection in part of the major problem we confront in the political arena as a result of confrontational politics," Mr. Qureshi said.

The 1990s have brought few signs that Pakistan's political elite, drawn largely from landowning "feudals", can relieve the poverty and ignorance in which the majority of its rapidly growing population of nearly 130 million remain mired.

Ms. Bhutto, her critics say, is loath to risk alienating her hardcore powerbase in Sindh province by seeking a political solution to the grievances of Karachi's Urdu-speaking Mohajirs.

Government officials began a dialogue with the disaffected Mohajir National Movement (MQM) last year, but this has yet to bear fruit. The MQM distrusts the state, which it blames for creating a rival MQM Haqqi faction. Many in the government suspect the MQM of harbouring separatist ambitions.

Ms. Bhutto has announced a crackdown against militant religious organisations, but sectarian killings have continued. Her extradition of bomb plot suspect Ramzi Ahmed Yousef to the United States last month and her promise to change the law after two Christians were sentenced to death for blasphemy spurred Islamic militants to decry her as a stooge of the West.

Pakistan's militant Islamic groups may be too profoundly divided to pose an immediate threat to the state.

But this year's spectacular successes of the Taleban militia in Afghanistan, many of whose recruits were Afghan refugees studying at religious schools in Pakistan, have set an example of how Islam can be used as a unifying banner.

"The government, hostage to the expediencies of politics, has turned a blind eye to the violations of the law by the religious lobby," writes Razia Bhatti, editor of the Karachi monthly Newline.

"Now, belatedly, it seems to have woken up to the sectarian nightmare. But having permitted sectarian fanatics to amass, display and use arms unbridled for so long, it will find the genie that much more difficult to contain," she argues.

LETTERS

A new tomorrow

To the Editor:

I JUST watched a TV show on the Israeli television, Channel Two (Tuesday Feb. 28). To my astonishment, Mirage, a Jordanian band, appeared on the show. Wa'el Abo Nowar and his wife appeared and sang a beautiful song at the end of the show, during which they talked about peace. I cannot deny that I scorned them when I first saw them on the Israeli screen, but after a while I began to think rational. After all, don't we all want peace? Then why don't we put aside all the years of hatred and wars and begin a new tomorrow?

Abraham Darwish,
 Yarmouk University,
 Irbid.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Californians seek peace on an earthquake fault

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — A vibration on a highway or in a high-rise building or a glass of water that quivers almost imperceptibly can cause hearts to race and palms to sweat in this earthquake-prone city.

"A truck going by that rattles the house a little will make my wife's eyes dart around. Before, those things could be easily ignored," said Stu Yahm, 67, who lives in Northridge, the heart of last year's earthquake.

"Now, we wonder, 'is this the preamble to the big one,'" he said, referring to the long-predicted California earthquake that forecasters warn could be strong enough to devastate this city of 8.6 million people.

Those shaken to the core by last January 19th's earthquake that killed 61 people and caused billions of dollars in damages have already fled. Those who remain seem determined to stay — damn the predictions.

The South California Earthquake Centre has been busy preparing a new age of earthquake activity after 200 years of relative quiet with a 60 per cent chance of a major tremor in the next 30 years.

Worse, the U.S. Geological Survey said recently that slippage from the 1994 Northridge quake, which measured 6.7 on the Richter scale, put Southern California at an even greater risk of earthquakes than previously feared.

"Where would I go?" asked Playa del Rey Real Estate agent George Aronson, 81, who has survived three earthquakes and the recent floods and droughts and who remains welded to the area's weather and natural beauty.

"I love it here. If a 9.0 comes, then I just figure 'well, my number's up.'"

Incredibly, many insist they don't even think about a quake and find reasons for believing that they will be spared, usually because they have been little affected in the past.

"We live on bedrock," said Ann Erickson as she tools around the steep hills of nearby Pasadena in her green Jaguar. "No, I don't think about it. So the

ground shakes for a few seconds. It's better than shovelling snow for hours."

Adrian Finkelstein, a psychiatrist with the University of California, said many who survived the last quake believe they'll get through the next one or are in "some form of denial."

Others, he said, still on edge from the last quake have deepened their religious faiths, take anxiety medication, relaxation exercises or undergo hypnosis.

Asked how he deals with it, "I am not in denial. I know it could happen any time... but I have weighed the benefits (of staying) against the risks and prepared myself well."

Survivors who lived in or around Northridge, say that, yes, to make psychological peace sitting atop an unstable fault, they have made concessions.

Terra Yahm, 47, sleeps in her street clothes every night while her husband, Stu, keeps an earthquake kit by his bedside complete with cellular phone, flashlight, water, radio and tools to turn off the gas.

Many keep the gas tank in their car full and the truck well stocked with food, medicine and supplies. They reinforce their walls with steel rods and cover windows — potential bombs in a quake — with a transparent film.

Laurie Adamshick, 40, recalled the night of the quake when she clutched her newborn as everything went pitch black and then what sounded like a train roaring through her house sent dishes and bookcases flying around the rooms.

"Even though we're ready for the next one — and I mean really ready — a small rumble still makes us jump out of our skin," she said.

"Everytime we have another aftershock I feel the panic rising."

Sometimes, she said, she asks herself: "What am I doing here? I shouldn't even be living here."

Things that never had any significance to her before now make her catch her breath. She says she can't even talk about going over bridges and going up in high office buildings gives her the creeps.

"If I feel it vibrate even a little, it scares me," Ms. Adamshick said. "I didn't have that sensitivity before."



Parliamentary Carabinieri in Palermo carrying the coffin of a colleague who shot himself after accusations of mafia links

Rome turns a blind eye to mafia's killing spree

A spate of murders shows Cosa Nostra is regaining its political impunity, writes Andrew Gumbel in Rome.

SICILY has not seen such a grim spate of killings for years. The first victims were three young people in Corleone, the home of the most fearsome of the mafia clans, but which had not seen a murder for almost 17 years.

Then, the action moved to Palermo, where three men were gunned down in quick succession less than a month ago.

Recently Domenico Buscetta, nephew of the most important informer to have broken ranks with Cosa Nostra, Tommaso Buscetta, was shot dead as he was leaving the jewellery store that he ran in the Sicilian capital.

In all, at least nine people have died in Sicily in mafia hits in one week this month. And, nobody is betting that it will stop there.

"This is a major reaffirmation of mafia power," said Pino Arlacchi, one of Italy's top mafia experts and the deputy chairman of the parliamentary anti-mafia commission.

"If the state does not give an appropriate response, we could soon see murders of prominent public figures."

The outburst of violence provides convincing proof that the mafia is recovering fast, both from the capture, two years ago, of its most

powerful leader, Salvatore "Totò" Riina, and from the series of judicial investigations that have been launched thanks to the testimony of hundreds of mafia turncoats.

Once again, Cosa Nostra can pick its victims with almost complete impunity. In each case in the recent killings, the killers fled the scene of the crime without being recognised or stopped.

So what is going on? There is talk of a new mafia war, of a struggle for supremacy over the mob's drug trade and other interests, now Riina is out of the running. But, experts such as Mr. Arlacchi reject this theory.

"Riina did not rule by dictatorship, but, on the contrary, established on oligarchy of seven or eight families, to minimise the risk of attack by the judiciary or other mafia clans," he said. "This is not the start of a mafia war. At most, what we could see is a low-intensity struggle for position within the organisation."

None of the victims has

so far been connected to Riina and his Corleonesi Clan. In fact, the main targets appear to be relatives of mafiosi who have cooperated with the judicial authorities — the people who have done most to threaten Riina's power structure.

Domenico was the 11th relative that Tommaso Buscetta has lost since turning state's evidence in 1984. Another victim, Marcello Grado, was a distant cousin of the informer Totuccio Contorno, who has lost 24 family members and close friends.

Buscetta provided a convincing account of why such a massacre should resume in an interview he gave to the Rome daily La Repubblica. "Informers are a real weak point (for the mafia)," he said. "For two years, Totò Riina has been preoccupied by nothing else. He tried to discredit them but it didn't work. Now he's gone back down that old road well-worn years ago... killing innocent people."

It is, perhaps, no coincidence that the violence re-

sumed just as the former Italian prime minister, Giulio Andreotti, was being ordered to stand trial on charges of collusion with the mafia. The 17 turncoats whose evidence forms the basis of the case for the prosecution may want now to think twice about testifying in court.

There may also be a link with reports that a senior member of Cosa Nostra in jail in the United States, Gaetano Badalamenti, is thinking of turning state's evidence.

But the background to the recent violence may lie beyond the world of organised crime. In Sicily, you hear the same complaint again and again: that the state has lost interest in combatting the mafia, and that communication has broken down between the politicians in Rome and the judges and anti-mafia campaigners on the ground.

"Politicians don't want to recognise the danger of Cosa Nostra," Mr. Buscetta said.

"They are the biggest obstacle in the way of the magistrate, they are casting

doubt on the importance of men of honour who decide to cooperate with the state."

The problems began a year ago, with the rise to power of Silvio Berlusconi and his right-wing coalition. In the election campaign, prominent opponents accused Mr. Berlusconi of receiving mafia support in Sicily. These accusations took on greater weight with the arrest of a financial adviser to Riina, Pino Mandalari, last December.

Taps on Mr. Mandalari's phone showed that the mafia had sought frequent contact with Sicilian members of Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and its neo-Fascist ally, the National Alliance, and that the contacts were, at least to some extent, reciprocal.

Mr. Berlusconi has denied charges of collusion with organised crime. But his actions have done little to inspire confidence in his anti-mafia credentials. In office, he replaced the distinguished head of a special Rome-based anti-mafia

task force and imposed an inexperienced politician from the ranks of his party, Tiziana Parenti, as head of the parliamentary anti-mafia commission.

Fellow members of the commission, including Mr. Arlacchi, say they have been unable to work since Ms. Parenti was appointed. They called her "partisan, superficial and incompetent." They have repeatedly urged her to resign, but she has refused to do so.

Meanwhile, the debate on the mafia grows more raucous each week, as Mr. Berlusconi's allies accuse the journalists, academics and magistrates who are involved in the fight against organised crime of deliberately targeting political opponents.

Italy's new government, headed by Lamberto Dini, has proved too weak to intervene. It leaves a strong impression that Rome is fiddling while Sicily is burning.

In 1992 and 1993 we managed to break the links the mafia had enjoyed with politics since the war. Now the mafia is working with new political allies," Mr. Arlacchi said. "We don't know for sure who they are yet, but the evidence is building"

The Independent.

King urges Rabin to speed up peace process

(Continued from page 1)

with King Hussein at the Hashemiyeh Palace that the main theme for the meeting was ways and means to accelerate the implementation of the peace treaty.

The Aqaba summit, came two weeks ahead of a visit to the U.S. by King Hussein. The sources said the King was scheduled to head for Washington on March 24 and a meeting with President Bill Clinton was scheduled for March 26 or 27.

The Aqaba summit followed strong criticism of Israel by Foreign Minister Kabarti in the context of the Palestinian track of negotiations and a disappointing Arab-Israeli meeting on the fate of displaced Palestinians.

In that meeting, Israel refused to move quickly towards the repatriation of the hundreds of thousands of displaced and insisted on what looked like a lengthy procedure before it would agree to

any action.

Mr. Kabarti, in comments to the Jordan Times on Wednesday, said time was running out for the Middle East process as Israel and the United States were expected to turn full-time attention to domestic elections.

The Aqaba summit was also expected to have covered the outcome of the March 7 meeting on the displaced, but it was not immediately known how King Hussein and Mr. Rabin tackled the issue.

11th parliament. Other candidates for the JBA presidency include Khalaf Masadeh, Marwan Hussein and Omar Dumrah.

Observers said it was hard to determine who was supporting whom and that West Bankers' votes would be divided mainly between Mr. Nasser and Mr. Mjalli while the 350-strong Islamists, who do not have their own candidate for the presidency, would probably be backing Mr. Mjalli.

U.S. urges Israel, Syria

(Continued from page 1)

the two sides and the United States that the security problem is the cornerstone of the whole agreement," Mr. Rabinovich said.

"Therefore there is no reason to put the cart before the horse... first of all come to understanding on the security issues and after that return to discussion on questions of the nature of peace and the nature of the final line," he added.

Israel's Yediot Ahronoth daily said on Friday members of Mr. Christopher's party would discuss possible Golan Security arrangements with Israel's army chief on Saturday night.

Queen chairs symposium

(Continued from page 3)

Inclusive and participatory political systems must be accompanied by equally open economic systems. Governments or international donors alone cannot adequately implement strategies for social welfare and cohesion. Social solidarity is deeply rooted in the cultural norms and communal family structures of the south. It does not have to be invented or created, though it may have to be strengthened and stimulated, in our increasingly urban, consumer-oriented societies, however, such social solidarity can only be adequately promoted by a parallel process of economic expansion that guarantees an equitable distribution of benefits.

The recent report of the international commission on peace and food of which I am a member, entitled "Uncommon Opportunities: An Agenda for Peace and Equitable Development," identified new opportunities and strategies for the conversion of industries of war into industries of economic productivity, food production, employment and peace. This vital transformation of our priorities, also, cannot be undertaken solely by governments. It must be grounded in the will and participation of the people at the grassroots level — in the human dynamism and commitment of organised civil society.

NGOs can play an effective role in the promotion of social development, particularly among marginalised groups such as rural women, and in the formulation of effective strategies to accelerate job creation, regional cooperation, demilitarisation and peace. In Jordan, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the International Commission on Peace and Food

are cooperating to convene a conference on human security in the Middle East to further these goals along the lines of the international commission's findings.

As we move forward to promote sustainable human development throughout the south, we should recognise and build on the strengths that exist within our own cultures.

The social problems we all suffer from today — especially those of social fragmentation and pressures on individuals in rapidly expanding urban cultures — lead themselves to cross-cultural exchanges and learning. For instance, the strengths of Middle Eastern culture are rooted in its powerful family structures and its tradition of social cohesion based on religious and cultural values; hence, widespread poverty and unemployment in the Middle East are not accompanied by widespread homelessness or criminal violence. Northern industrial societies have much to learn from the Middle East and other southern cultures about the role of family and the cohesive influence of social traditions. Conversely, we in the south, can profitably learn from the north's experience in modern democratic systems and civil society structures.

We do have much to learn from each other. We certainly have much to give to each other. And we have good reason to do both, if we are to translate the recommendations of this summit into concrete actions, sustainable progress, and a "society for all."

Thank you very much. I wish you great success in your deliberations.

Christopher says peace process reenergised

(Continued from page 1)

troops and elections.

"For Israelis this means concrete steps to improve the security situation, to preempt terror and to bring to justice those responsible for violence."

Addressing Israel's demand for a clampdown on

guerrillas opposed to their peace deal, Mr. Arafat said: "We are doing all we can. I have no magic stick."

Self-rule began in Gaza and the West Bank enclave of Jericho in May. Its expansion has been delayed by Israeli security concerns.

UNRWA satisfied with Amman meeting

(Continued from page 12)

year." As a result delegates were seeking ways to produce adequate financing for its 1995 budget, he added.

According to an UNRWA official, this year the agency's regular fund budget is \$323 million. The regular fund pays for existing activities and is completely covered by contributions from donor countries, while the United Nations meets the cost of the agency's international core staff.

UNRWA's appeal for adequate funding did, however, elicit pledges from major donor countries and these were listed in the agency's statement.

Delegates from the United States announced a supplementary contribution of \$15 million, bringing its total for 1995 to \$70 million. The United Kingdom pledged \$1 million for the relocation of UNRWA headquarters from Vienna to Gaza. Sweden pledged \$2 million for the second phase of PIP, a slight increase in its contribution to the agency's regular fund and indicated that financial support would be given for headquarters' move.

Spain intends to increase its last year's contribution by 29 per cent and to aid PIP phase two. Germany pledged a 25 per cent increase in funds it allocated to PIP for 1995, while Italy stated it would balance a reduction in its general contribution by increasing its earmarked contribution for initiatives to be carried out in sectors such as

health, education and income generation.

Norway also announced a small raise in its funding for 1995 and the European Union "pledged to consider with sympathy UNRWA's request for further funding to complete construction of Gaza hospital."

PIP is part of the U.N. general programme to support the peace process economically and socially and is specifically directed at the West Bank and Gaza.

The first phase of PIP concentrated on job creation and social services, while phase two includes an investment and income generation plan. In general, PIP seeks to update the infrastructure of UNRWA within the five-year interim period. Then, when the time comes for the agency to hand-over its responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority and to host governments, the institutions and infrastructure will be in good order.

The interim period is the time-span set out by the DoP, from the start of autonomy in the occupied territories until the final status is decided upon.

The move of headquarters to Gaza, as approved by the U.N. following the signing of the PLO-Israeli accord, will be financed separately by donor countries over and above contributions for the agency's regular fund, Mr. Turkmen said. This, he added, was also approved by delegates at the meeting.

Mr. Turkmen said that the

move to Gaza would cost \$14 to \$15 million, but \$5 to \$6 million is expected to be compensation for those UNRWA staff who do not wish to shift to the new headquarters.

Also speaking at the press conference was U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Immigration, Population and Refugees Phyllis Oakley and the French permanent representative to U.N. organisations and institutions in Vienna, Ambassador Jean Dague.

"The European Union's opinion is that UNRWA should continue its activities and tasks, (which) is ever more important considering the circumstances," Mr. Dague said.

"With its programmes, activities and PIP, the agency can contribute to peace and stability in the region." Prior to the meeting some of the meeting's participants visited Gaza and the West Bank. In this context Ms. Oakley told Thursday's press conference that many of the donors had heard of the difficult conditions. However, witnessing it first hand had made an impression, she said.

"The visit to the Gaza and the West Bank, the frank discussions here and the progress of the peace process have all come together and increased the importance of UNRWA's role," Ms. Oakley said.

Ms. Oakley and Mr. Dague were the leaders of the two working groups which were held on the second and final day of the meetings.

West Bank lawyers vote

(Continued from page 1)

support to the Palestinian people and to their national rights and identity and to enable them to establish their own institutions that will have independence in accordance with the agreements between Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

The prosecutor general can appeal the results of any elections they may deem illegal to the Higher Court of Justice and ask for the council's dissolution.

Speaking to the Jordan Times, Mr. Tal said that he had no idea if he would win the issue to the High Court. "It depends on how procedures go today," he concluded. During a meeting with Mr. Nasser on Thursday, however, Mr. Tal said that the ministry "will implement its decision." During the elections, representatives of the Ministry of Justice refused to sign ballot papers belonging to West Bank lawyers (JBA law stipulates that the ballots must be signed by the minister of justice or his representatives).

The PNA urged lawyers from the West Bank to support the ministers' decision, said Omar Khatib, the charge d'affaires at the Palesti-

nian embassy in Amman.

"The decision to sever links with the PNA is a reflection of Palestinian people including lawyers," he told Petra.

"The process of consolidating ties of brotherhood between Jordan and the West Bank will continue."

Although results of the first round of voting had not been announced by press time Friday, it was clear that elections for the JBA would move into a second round to determine the new president of the JBA. Only one committee had begun counting votes by 7:00 p.m. Candidates for the presidency must secure 75 per cent of all votes to be considered president. If no candidate wins the 75 per cent majority, another round follows and the candidate with the majority vote wins.

In the packed, chaotic Professional Associations Complex Friday night, Mr. Nasser and Hussein Mjalli were widely believed to be the favourites for presidency. Mr. Nasser is a high-profile figure, and in addition to his post as JBA president, serves as president of the Freedom Committee in the Arab World of the Arab Lawyers Union. Mr. Mjalli served as president of the JBA 1985-87 and also served as a member of parliament in Jordan's

Dollar plunge adds pressure on Arab Gulf economies

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The latest plunge in the U.S. dollar will put further pressure on Arab Gulf economies that are already hit by low oil prices, experts said Wednesday.

As the U.S. currency slid to an all-time low against the Japanese yen, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states could suffer from a dual loss since their oil exports are priced in dollars and their currencies are pegged to the greenback.

"The dollar's decline will have an adverse impact on the economies of Arab Gulf states since crude oil is their main source of income and the U.S. dollar is its official price," said Mohammed Al Asumi, chief economist at the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank (EIB).

"This means a decline in the GCC's purchasing power and an increase in the value of imports. What aggravates the problem is that GCC states import more than 80 per cent of their goods and services from Japan and Europe," he pointed out.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have already been hurt by the strong yen, as Japan is their biggest commercial partner, with a two-way trade of \$32

billion in 1993.

A sharp drop in crude prices has slashed their income from more than \$180 billion in 1981 to an average \$70 billion a year. But the real value of the oil exports is far lower considering the weak dollar.

The sharp fluctuations in the dollar have prompted calls on GCC states to delink their currencies from the greenback and press for a change in oil pricing. But officials have ruled out such changes in the near future, apparently for political reasons.

Only the Kuwaiti dinar is linked to a basket of currencies but the dollar has the lion share. Its decline last year led to an increase in the price of consumer products imported from non-dollar countries but the influence was stronger in the other GCC members.

"The value of GCC imports have increased in the past two years because of the weak U.S. dollar. This of course has a depressing effect on economic activities and the government budgets," Mr. Asumi told AFP.

"Banks said GCC budget deficits could widen this year if the dollar remained low as this means a higher import bill and lower real revenues. Most of them have slashed

spending for the current fiscal year and others are planning to do so in expectation oil prices will remain weak.

The GCC produces around 13 million barrels per day (b/d) of oil and crude exports account for more than 80 per cent of their total exports.

Oil prices have remained below OPEC's minimum target of \$21 since the Gulf war, averaging \$18.44 in 1992 and falling to \$16.33 in 1993 and \$15.53 in 1994. This pushed the GCC's earnings from \$77 billion to \$74 billion and around \$70 billion.

"There is no doubt the decline in the dollar will increase pressure on the Gulf economies but at the same time it could prompt them to press ahead with reforms," said Zuhair Kaswani, a UAE stockbroker and economic expert.

"It could also revive the debate on the need to detach their currencies from the dollar and this in turn could help their attempts to align their currencies and accelerate plans to integrate their economies," he added.

An official breakdown showed GCC's imports from the U.S. stood at around \$9 billion in 1994 while those from other non-dollar industrial giants Japan, Britain, Germany and France exceeded \$20 billion.

Rubin says U.S. committed to keeping dollar safe haven

ARLINGTON, Virginia (R) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin defended the embattled dollar Friday, saying the United States was determined to keep the currency as a safe haven in times of international economic turmoil.

Mr. Rubin made clear the United States and other wealthy industrial countries are willing to play the market intervention card again should such an effort seem sensible as a tactic to rebuild the dollar's value.

"This administration (is) fully committed to the sound monetary and fiscal policies necessary for sustained growth, low inflation, a strong and stable dollar, and maintenance of the dollar as the world's principal reserve currency," he told a newspaper group.

The dollar's role as the premier reserve currency that investors flock to ride out international storms has come into question in the wake of persistent budget deficits, the controversial Mexican bailout and the slowing of the economic expansion.

In his remarks, Mr. Rubin said the treasury and Federal Reserve were in close contact and were continuing to consult with their counterparts in the other Group of Seven

(G-7) nations — Germany, Japan, Britain, France, Canada and Italy.

"Our policy is to intervene when it makes sense and not to do so when it doesn't," he told the National Newspaper Association.

The United States joined its economic allies in a concerted effort last week to buy dollars in the huge and rolling currency markets to halt the greenback's downward spiral, but the effort proved futile.

But Mr. Rubin, in his carefully worded remarks, appeared to take the view that this did not mean the United States was abandoning this weapon or intended to leave the currency unprotected in the marketplace.

He also reiterated the view of Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan Wednesday that the United States has more than enough economic muscle to aid the dollar despite its loan package for Mexico.

He said the treasury's exchange stabilisation fund has "more than adequate" reserves to defend the dollar on global currency markets.

One of the architects of the Mexican rescue package, Mr. Rubin defended the plan, saying the United States had little choice but to help its

neighbour and key trading partner. "The risks associated with acting were far less than the risks to our interests of taking no action at all," he said.

Mr. Rubin said he was convinced that in time investor confidence in Mexico will be restored, adding, "while markets will move around, the programme is sound and it should work."

He took aim at another concern often cited by market players for reducing their dollar cache — the belief that the United States is politically incapable of making the painful choices needed to restore fiscal balance.

"We are also resolute in our commitment to fiscal discipline and continued progress on reducing the deficit," he said.

Australian government announces plans for tight 1995-96 budget

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian Treasurer Ralph Willis, grappling to control unsustainable economic growth, announced plans Friday to slash the country's budget deficit.

He said the government would "act decisively to ensure that growth is sustained rather than short-circuited by rising inflation, an increasing current account deficit and higher interest rates."

Mr. Willis has already increased his forecast for the current account deficit in the financial year to June 1995 from 13 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) to 26 billion dollars.

The central Reserve Bank of Australia has increased the official interest rate from 4.75 per cent to 7.50 per cent since August 1994 to lock in low inflation as evidence of rapid economic growth set off alarm bells about future prices.

The treasurer said he would "significantly tighten policy" in the 1995-96 budget to be announced in May to establish the basis for strong economic growth and low inflation over the medium term.

"Sustained economic growth over a period of years is the only sure way of reducing unemployment to acceptable levels as well as improving the living standards of all Australians," Mr. Willis said.

who say the economy is growing too fast, at an estimated four-to-five per cent annually.

Releasing his framework for the 1995-96 budget, Mr. Willis said the starting point for the 1995-96 budget deficit would be about 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product.

Guy Bruten, senior economist at SBC Australia, said that this implied a budget deficit of 5.5-to-6.5 billion dollars before the government's fiscal tightening programme was implemented.

"It's only the starting point, the beginning of the process," said Stephen Hammarick, economist at NetWest Capital Markets, adding that the forecast budget for the financial year ahead would "certainly be a lot lower than that."

Mr. Willis said economic growth would remain strong in 1995-96 but would ease to a more sustainable rate.

"In 1995-96, the current account deficit will be favourably affected by the improved outlook for world growth, rising commodity prices and the breaking of the drought, which should all help to boost exports," Mr. Willis said.

But higher world interest rates would continue to increase the cost of servicing overseas debt, he added. Mr. Willis said he aimed to achieve a budget surplus in 1996-97 and would tighten policy to boost national saving and constrain growth in domestic demand.

Mexico launches shock therapy on battered economy

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico's government launched a shock therapy programme on Thursday, unveiling a plan to raise taxes and slash spending that it said was bound to be hard on all Mexicans.

Struggling to break out of the country's worst economic crisis in more than a decade, the government promised Mexicans little gain and a lot of pain over the next few months and said it had basically run out of alternatives.

"There is no easy way out," Finance Minister Guillermo Ortiz said in a live television address that acknowledged the hardships millions of Mexicans — workers, small businessmen and housewives — have suffered since the currency's devaluation in December.

The harsh economic plan is likely to anger some ordinary Mexicans already galvanised to social protest by a 14-month peasant rebellion in the southern state of Chiapas.

The economy, which President Ernesto Zedillo promised would grow by four per cent this year when he took office Dec. 1, is already in a deep recession.

Mr. Ortiz acknowledged that steps announced in the new package, such as tax

increases and a 35 per cent rise in gasoline prices, would add inflation to the economic situation.

Prices would rise by about 42 per cent this year, he said. Against the backdrop of rapidly rising prices, millions of poor Mexicans were offered just a 10 per cent rise in the minimum wage, starting April 1.

Subject to congressional approval, value added tax would also rise to 15 per cent from 10 per cent, putting pressure on buyers, but also crimping sales in a country where tens of thousands of firms have already gone out of business this year.

It marks a stunning turnaround for a country once considered a darling of foreign investors. But by tightening the belts on all Mexicans, rich and poor, they hope to win back the one commodity the country desperately needs — confidence in its currency.

With investors deserting Mexico in droves, the peso has lost more than 50 per cent of its value against the dollar since the December devaluation.

Faced with shortages of both confidence and hard currency, Mr. Ortiz said the country was unable to impose a more stable exchange rate

regime than its existing free float.

But with a mixture of high interest rates and timely intervention by the central bank in the foreign exchange markets, there should be a "substantial appreciation" of the exchange rate in the near future, Mr. Ortiz said.

Backing up the programme is more than \$50 billion offered Mexico last month by the United States, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other allies.

Mr. Ortiz said public spending would be slashed by 9.8 per cent from last year's levels, and government jobs would be axed.

The current account deficit, which mushroomed to almost \$30 billion last year as Mexico imported more than it could afford, was set to fall to about \$2 billion. It could be wiped out entirely, Mr. Ortiz said.

Such measures won cautious approval from financial analysts, but whether Mexican society would accept the sacrifices was a question even government officials were unable to answer.

"Nobody's denying that there are social costs associated with the adjustment programme," said one official, who asked not to be named.

Survey shows falling Russian support for free market

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Support for the free market has plummeted among the Russians, with less than a quarter supporting the market economy, according to a survey by the European Union (EU).

The survey, based on interviews with 1,000 Russians, found only 22 per cent, agreed with the "creation of a market economy... largely free from state control."

Sixty-three per cent said such an economy was wrong. According to the EU's fifth "Eurobarometer" report on public opinion in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Russian support for the free market has fallen 25 percentage points since 1991.

Russians were among the most pessimistic easterners when it comes to hopes about their economic future. Only 16 per cent expected their household finances would improve during 1995, according to the EU survey, which gave no margin of error.

Only Ukrainians and Georgians had a more negative outlook. The Russian survey was included in an EU poll conducted last November in 18

nations. Russians were frequently among the most gloomy.

Only sixteen per cent thought "things in our country are going in the right direction." That outstripped all the others except the despondent Ukrainians and Armenians.

Only eight per cent said they were satisfied with the development of democracy in Russia. Bulgarians were the only nation with a lower level of satisfaction — four per cent.

Russians and Georgians were most skeptical about respect for human rights in their nations. Just 14 per cent were positive about human rights there.

In contrast, Albanians appeared as the former East Bloc's greatest optimists: 59 per cent believed Albania was headed in the right direction, 54 per cent expected an improvement in their household finances and the same percentage were satisfied with the level of human rights respect.

Five years after the fall of the hard-line communist regime in Romania, its citizens appear to be the greatest backers of the free market, with

71 per cent declaring it right for the country's future.

In all, the EU interviewed 18,834 people for its fifth "Eurobarometer" poll of opinion in the former Communist Bloc. The survey was based on face-to-face interviews carried out with the help of local agencies.

In the six former Soviet republics surveyed, an average of 66 per cent of citizens said they thought their country was headed in the wrong direction, while only 16 per cent expected their standard of living to rise this year.

The poll also asked its eastern neighbours what they thought about the EU. Surprisingly, those countries whose governments are pushing hardest to join the EU were lukewarm about the western European bloc.

Only 32 per cent of Hungarians, 34 per cent of Czechs and 42 per cent of Poles said they had a "positive image" of the EU.

The EU found much more rousing support in Albania where 72 per cent had a rosy view of the union. Georgians gave the EU the biggest thumbs down. Just 25 per cent expressed a favourable view.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY MARCH 11, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Handle money matters wisely and they will soon be behind you. Come to a better understanding with a loved one today. Talk less and listen more to what's being said.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Situations arise today so that you'll know your exact position with partners. You may want to please them more, but you can take these changes in stride.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Plan some time today for improving relationships with fellow associates and all works more effectively. Moderation is the keynote now and will lead to understanding in the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Relieve worry and tension today with some outdoor recreation. Be with the right kinds of friends. Have greater rapport with kin.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Investigate a new enterprise that could be fine for you today. Expansion should be uppermost in your mind for both business and personal life.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Go to the right source for the data you need to improve your daily routines. Regular partners could give you fine suggestions so follow them if they seem correct.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You find the right idea for adding to your abundance and you should follow through on your ideas. Take care of a minor household repair later today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are capable of gaining personal aims today so go after them intelligently. Avoid one who has ulterior motives that could be harmful to you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You will get better results today if you are more secretive about a money making plan you have in mind. The future looks brighter for you and you could get big results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get your friends to cooperate with you and gain some cherished aims easily. Meet new personalities at evening parties. Dress in style and circulate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can make big progress in career, credit and civic affairs now. Gain support of an expert today and follow intuitions for best results.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get out of the doldrums today; you need to be more active. A new friend can be relied upon for help now. Avoid one who has a jealous streak.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas

ACROSS

- 1 Compression
- 4 Fan
- 9 Brevier Press
- 12 Aphrodite's son
- 15 City on the Missouri
- 16 Geron film
- 17 Stepper film with "The"
- 19 Crotchtop
- 20 Easily shaped
- 21 Threat info
- 23 Dance stance
- 24 Campus figure
- 25 Hunted with care
- 28 Superior courage
- 30 Islands (Baltic Sea group)
- 31 Imposing
- 32 Sandwich meat
- 34 Same
- 36 Wimbledon

DOWN

- 2 Get-up-and-go
- 3 Not grey — (be unconcerned)
- 6 Load cry
- 8 Grasshopper
- 5 Soap plant
- 7 Libretto
- 8 Piercing
- 9 Peter (to)
- 10 Best part
- 11 Advertiser
- 12 Spot
- 14 Foundling
- 18 Bundled up
- 22 Warden
- 25 — au rum
- 26 Butter cup
- 27 All-star outfielder
- 28 Operatic soprano
- 29 Mrs. estate
- 31 Overcoat
- 32 Overlook
- 33 Becomes
- 34 Grilled
- 35 Purple-red
- 36 Some ciphers
- 39 Yarn with the golden touch
- 41 Archdeacon
- 42 Theatrical failure
- 44 Cut across
- 45 Plough path
- 46 Debutante
- 47 Salford
- 48 Inmate
- 49 Quaint part
- 50 Plough path
- 52 Insolence

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ADNUT

DONUP

TOOLEC

TROIMP

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: HIS

Yesterday's Jumbles: FAITH SWASH CAUGHT WHITEN

Answer: What the class learned while studying electricity — "WHAT'S WATT"

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

TCC opens 'collect' calls to U.S., U.K. and Australia

THE TELECOMUNICATIONS Corporation has been providing a new service since the beginning of this year whereby businessmen and travellers could call "collect" from Britain, U.S. and Australia in the first stage through the international exchange operator who will make the connection either against the caller's credit card or on his/her account as a "collect call." Callers from Jordan to the above mentioned countries, should dial 1800002 (to Britain), 1880000 or 18800447 (to U.S.) and 1880002 (to Australia). To call from Britain, the number to dial is 800890962, from U.S. 8002302763 and from Australia 1800881969. The service for other countries will be provided later. (Al Dustour).

THE AL Azraq Cooperative Society will Saturday begin supplying the market with iodised salt. The manager of the Al Azraq Salt Refining Factory said 50 tonnes of iodised salt will be put on the market every day to be sold at 130 fils per kilogramme. The manager explained that the factory could not supply bakeries with salt at JD 30 per tonne and at the same time add iodine to table salt and sell it at the old price. Iodine costs \$20 per kilogramme and, according to the manager, large amounts that should be sufficient for two months were imported from Belgium. However, he pointed out that the factory would continue to supply the market with iodised table salt as long as it does not supply the bakeries with salt at JD 30 per tonne. "We will automatically stop adding iodine to the salt if we go back to the old price unless the price is increased to JD 76 per tonne which is the cost price without any profit margin," the manager emphasised. (Al Dustour).

THE GENERAL assembly of the Agricultural Materials Trade Association decided to reject a decision of the minister of agriculture to fix the prices of agricultural materials and to follow up the matter with the prime minister in cooperation with the Agricultural Engineers Association and other concerned parties. The general assembly also decided to stop extending credit facilities to retailers and farmers and be satisfied with only cash sales. In addition, the general assembly threatened to launch a general strike if any agricultural trader was fined upon refusing to abide by the ministry's decision. According to the head of the association, a meeting with the minister of agriculture has failed to resolve the dispute as the minister insisted on the decision backdated to Feb. 1, 1995. (Al Aswag).

PROJECTED self-revenues of independent government institutions for 1995 are estimated at JD 332 million, some JD 52 million higher than the 1994 figure. The treasury provides about JD 51 million in financial support to a few institutions such as the National Aid Fund, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and the Vocational Training Corporation (JD 33 million) and JD 18 million in development projects for the Water Authority and the Urban Development Corporation. Projected expenditures for the 20 independent government institutions are estimated at JD 500 million of which JD 276 million are current spending and the rest are capital spending. As such the overall deficit for this year exceeds JD 107 million with the Water Authority alone accounting for JD 7 million of the deficit (Al Ra'i).

THE STANDARD and Specifications Corporation has completed a directory that includes 981 Jordanian standards and specifications (Al Ra'i).

Abu Dhabi approves key petrochemical, refining projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi has approved multi-billion-dollar projects to set up its first petrochemical complex and double the output of its main refinery, an official report said. The Supreme Petroleum Council (SPC), which runs the emirate's huge energy sector, endorsed the plans involving an investment of nearly \$3 billion for the projects, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) said. The SPC directed that ADNOC proceeds immediately with the front end engineering design of the Ruwais refinery expansion and upgrading master plan, ADNOC said.

"It also agreed that ADNOC continues to diversify its manufacturing product lines by building a petrochemical complex at Ruwais. The complex will utilise existing gases to produce valuable polyethylene products that can also be used as feedstock for the development of the downstream industries."

The bulletin said both petrochemical and refining projects would be completed before the year 2000 and were part of overall plans to expand the United Arab Emirates (UAE) energy sector to face growing world demand. Industry sources said the petrochemical complex at Ruwais, nearly 200 kilometres north of Abu Dhabi, would cost nearly \$1.5 billion and produce around 300,000 tonnes of polyethylene per year. It would be fully owned by ADNOC, of which 60 per cent is controlled by the Abu Dhabi government and the rest by Japanese, British and French oil firms.

The complex will be the UAE's first petrochemical project as it produces only fertilizers, including around 500,000 tonnes of urea and 350,000 tonnes of ammonia per year. Most of the fertilizers are exported to China. Industry sources said the petrochemical plant was designed to tap the UAE's enormous gas reserves, estimated at nearly 5.7 trillion cubic metres, the fourth largest natural gas reserves in the world after those of Russia, Iran and Qatar.

The plans coincide with expectations of a large increase in Gulf petrochemical exports following last year's

historic deal by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which will open new markets for such products. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, Kuwait and Qatar are the main petrochemical producers in the Arab World, with their output exceeding half the total Arab production of around 13.5 million tonnes per year, according to official Arab estimates.

ADNOC said the refining expansion would nearly double Ruwais' production of around 140,000 barrels per day (b/d), bringing the total refining output to nearly 350,000 b/d, or six per cent of the combined Arab refining production.

The UAE's other refinery at Umm Al Nar has already been expanded to 72,000 b/d from 60,000 b/d at a cost of \$80 million. Official sources put the cost of the Ruwais expansion project at around \$1.5 billion.

"The project will increase the refined products export potential of Abu Dhabi and contribute substantially to technology development," ADNOC said.

The facilities envisaged include a 135,000 b/d crude distillation unit, a 200,000 b/d condensate distillation unit, a 46,000 b/d hydrocracker and necessary downstream processing, storage, handling and loading facilities," it explained.

Holiday dampens AFM trading

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading remained low and prices dipped a little at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) last week as investors took their own time to do serious business after the long Eid Al Fitr holiday, brokers said Friday. The weekly report of the market said volume of trading in three days of business beginning Monday was JD 2.8 million compared with JD 16.2 million in five days of business in the previous week. Trading is done Saturday to Wednesday, with Thursday set aside for accounting.

The report said 1.3 million shares changed hands under 2,207 deals during the week.

Stocks of 71 companies were involved in the trading, and as business closed only eight of them showed gains; 63 posted drops and 10 remained stable.

The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies closed at 142.6 points, down 1.3 points or 0.9 per cent from the week's opening of 143.9 points.

The separate sector indices showed that services sector shares lost 2.6 points or 1.9 per cent, industrials 1.3 points or one per cent, commercial banks 1.1 points or 0.7 per cent and insurance companies 0.1 point or 0.1 per cent.

Industrials accounted for

JD 1.31 million, or 46.9 per cent of the weekly volume, followed by banks with JD 780,000 (27.9 per cent), the services sector with JD 670,000 (24 per cent) and insurance stock with JD 33,000 (1.2 per cent).

The average daily trading was JD 930,000 compared with JD 3.2 million in the previous week.

Brokers said they expected trading to improve this week as investors sought to make up for the relative inactivity during the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, dozens of companies are also expected to announce formalised final figures for 1994 March.

In the meantime, brokers also said there was a steady flow of capital from the mar-

ket to commercial banks in the wake of a hike in interest rates on deposits.

"Depositors now get around nine per cent on short-term, three months or six months, deposits, and many (AFM) investors are turning to take advantage of this offer," said a broker, who, like other AFM dealers, cannot be identified by name under standing market guidelines.

"The result is a crunch on liquidity in the market," said the broker, noting also that many speculators who depend on commercial bank credits for their operations in the market were also having second thoughts, given the parallel rise in the interest rate they have to pay the banks.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN				
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170				
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (04/03/1995 - 08/03/1995)				
WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	33,810	188.750	188.750	188.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	119,032	4.550	4.550	4.420
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	193,009	4.370	4.370	4.230
CAIRO AMMAN BANK	44,910	4.750	4.750	4.990
BANK OF JORDAN	1,430	3.600	3.600	3.500
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	28,368	1.520	1.520	1.490
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	7,608	2.750	2.750	2.720
THE HOUSING BANK	44,051	6.120	6.120	6.090
JORDAN SURETY BANK	58,103	3.000	3.000	3.000
JORDAN GULF BANK	7,479	1.370	1.370	1.320
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	78,436	3.910	3.910	3.830
BUSINESS BANK	1,225	3.500	3.500	3.500
BEIT ELAL SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	6,252	3.200	3.200	3.120
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	123,187	1.290	1.290	1.200
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	3,663	4.150	4.150	4.070
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	25,636	1.440	1.440	1.430
BANKS SECTOR		776297	INDEX NUMBER: 160.26	CHANGE: -0.71%
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	22,777	2.520	2.520	2.500
HOLY LAND INSURANCE	1,098	2.550	2.550	2.550
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	7,345	2.600	2.600	2.600
DELTA INSURANCE	1,293	1.560	1.560	1.810
INSURANCE SECTOR		32512	INDEX NUMBER: 136.89	CHANGE: -0.09%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	42,882	1.600	1.600	1.570
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	228,377	1.530	1.530	1.520
JORDAN MINERAL	3,329	2.900	2.900	2.900
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	1,212	6.750	6.750	6.750
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	32,702	4.900	4.900	4.850
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	103,039	3.440	3.440	3.360
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	12,455	2.350	2.350	2.190
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	9,218	1.200	1.200	1.130
MACHINERY EQUIP. REPAIRING & MAINTENANCE	4,140	0.730	0.730	0.690
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORS HOTELS	69,725	2.370	2.370	2.350
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	10,626	3.680	3.680	3.540
SERVICES SECTOR		517814	INDEX NUMBER: 130.92	CHANGE: -1.93%
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	32,388	33.900	33.900	33.500
ATANKER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	970	1.250	1.250	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	109,988	3.020	3.020	2.990
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	1,763	5.000	5.000	5.020
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	13,621	9.420	9.420	9.440
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	4,861	3.900	3.900	3.800
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR		1077192	INDEX NUMBER: 122.82	CHANGE: -1.02%
GRAND TOTAL		2409814	INDEX NUMBER: 142.70	
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (04/03/1995 - 08/03/1995)				
WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	5,913	0.940	0.940	0.900
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	32,679	0.800	0.800	0.780
KARMA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	9,931	1.500	1.500	1.420
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANISING LAND TRANS.	25,690	2.240	2.240	2.190
ARAB FEN ZEV CO	64,939	1.020	1.020	0.970
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	3,889	1.090	1.090	1.050
NATIONAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CO. LTD	8,052	1.740	1.740	1.660
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	6,327	1.150	1.150	1.100
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	10,136	1.720	1.720	1.630
NATIONAL MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES	42,619	1.270	1.270	1.220
EL-HAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	10,005	2.350	2.350	2.300
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	47,044	1.630	1.630	1.550
NATIONAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES	93,406	1.280	1.280	1.210
JORDAN STEEL	21,510	1.000	1.000	0.980
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	3,317	0.960	0.960	0.880
GRAND TOTAL		385573		

Financial Markets				
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank				
Precious Metals				
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	340.10	7.55	Silver	4.52
Other Currencies				
Currency	Bid	Offer	Currency	Bid
Bahraini Dinar	1.8060	1.8100	UAE Dirham	0.1865
Lebanese Lira	0.041775	0.042755	Greek Drachma	0.2675
Saudi Riyal	0.1829	0.1840	Cypriot Pound	1.4570
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3500		
Qatari Riyal	0.1875	0.1887		
Egyptian Pound	0.1850	0.2085		
Omani Riyal	1.7760	1.7850		
UAE Dirham	0.1865	0.1874		
Greek Drachma	0.2675	0.3125		
Cypriot Pound	1.4570	1.5580		

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin				
Date: 9/3/1995				
Currency	Bid	Offer	Currency	Bid
U.S. Dollar	0.6870	0.6890	Swiss Franc	0.5856
Sterling Pound	1.7121	1.7076	French Franc	0.1378
Deutsche Mark	0.4895	0.4919	Japanese Yen	0.7480
Swiss Franc	0.5856	0.5885	Dutch Guilder	0.4361
French Franc	0.1378	0.1385	Swedish Krona	0.0416
Japanese Yen	0.7480	0.7517	Italian Lira	0.0416
Dutch Guilder	0.4361	0.4383	Belgian Franc	0.0416
Swedish Krona	0.0416	0.0416		
Italian Lira	0.0416	0.0416		
Belgian Franc	0.0416	0.0416		

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES				
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.				
U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.4074/84	Canadian dollar	1.4114/24	
	1.5824/34	Deutschmarks	1.7888/98	
	29.17/21	Dutch guilders	1.7888/98	
	5.0225/75	Swiss francs	1.7888/98	
	1669.2/4.2	Belgian francs	1.7888/98	
	91.24/33	French francs	1.7888/98	
	7.1725/25	Italian lire	1.7888/98	
	6.2900/50	Japanese yen	1.7888/98	
	5.6400/10	Swedish crowns	1.7888/98	
	\$1.956/66	Norwegian crowns	1.7888/98	
One sterling	382.80/383.30	Danish crowns	1.7888/98	
One ounce of gold				

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

FOR RENT

Many apartments and villas furnished and unfurnished. We also have many listings of villas, flats, and building lots.

FOR SALE

Commercial and residential.

For more details call:
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 816655/816656
816655
Fax: 816652

A SECURE Hotel Sweiffyeh

Flat O.TEL SECURITY HOSPITALITY GASTRONOMY

All Suites Hotel FLAT O.TEL

الاجنحة الفندقية المكيفة الملوكة بمستوى عالمي جديد

863944 - 816690

Cheers Cafe

Hamburgers + Pizzas

ELITE CAFE Sweiffyeh

816690

At Turino

STUDIO HAIG

Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service

Develop your colour film at our shop and get:-

- JUMBO photo size 30% larger
- Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm

Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank. Phone: 60402
Sweiffyeh tel: 823891

La Coquette

FRENCH CUISINE ENJOY OUR NEW MENU

SEAFOOD LUNCH DINNER 7 DAYS A WEEK

68007 / 4

EURO DOLLAR

RENT A CAR

Your First Choice in Car Rental

Shmeisani Tel: 693399

FOR RENT

Deluxe Villas & Apartments in Amman

Sanabel REAL ESTATE Tel: 864230 Fax: 864231

RENT A RELIABLE CAR

AT A RELIABLE PRICE

TEL: 6 / 819676 FAX: 6 / 819676 ABDOUN

WE HAVE NO OTHER BRANCHES

SHENWAN GARDENS CHINESE RESTAURANT

Typical Chinese Foods Skilled Chinese Chefs

Open 11:30 - 3:30 & 6:00 - Midnight

Take away is available

Shenwan Street, Um Uthman Commercial Centre

Tel: 861174

Once Tasted Always Loved

MING-SHING Chinese Restaurant

The Best Cooking, Best Service, Best Atmosphere in Amman

Deir Ghbar - American Embassy St. near Baytuna Housing Estate

Open from: 12 noon - 3:30 p.m. 6:30 - 11:30 p.m.

Tel: 861658

FOR YOUR Advertisement in Jordan Times

Call tel: 667171 ext. 223

Duraclean

"Flower Fresh" cleaning for homes and businesses

FURNITURE CLEANING

TEL 836692

Bonita INN

Restaurant & Tapas

Open Daily from 12a.m. - 12p.m.

Tel: 61 50 61

"THEY" SAID at Turino

"AUTHENTIC COMMENTS"

Your restaurant is improving every time we attend it. Keep up the good job, for we much look forward for our next visit!

Turino Restaurant Sweiffyeh - 863944

DAJANI'S

Unique gold & gems jewelry.

Asian U-18 Basketball Championship

Jordan loses to South Korea; plays Thailand for 3rd place today

Alkhas chosen tournament's best defensive player

By Omar Bashtawi in Manila and Alex Bannayan in Amman

ALTHOUGH South Korea Friday dashed Jordan's hopes of reaching the Asian basketball final with a 69-51 win in the semifinals Friday, the Kingdom's under-18 national team still has a chance to make history when they play Thailand for third place today.

A win over Thailand will qualify Jordan, along with the top two teams, to the world championship which will be held later this year in Greece.

Titleholders China are on course for their fifth Asian title. They advanced to the final after eliminating Thailand 98-45.

Meanwhile, Jordan's Zeid Alkhas, who scored 25 points Friday, was chosen the tournament's top defensive player and was named in the Asian junior "dream team." He received a \$500 bonus.

Friday was not the Jordanian team's day however. The players were clearly exhausted and the South Koreans were not an easy team to beat. They had defeated Jordan 75-61 in the first round.

The Kingdom's players effectively limited their opponents' scoring ability in the first half which Korea won 28-27. However, the Jordanian team lacked offensive capability in the second half and the whole

burden of scoring fell on team captain Zeid Alkhas, while the team's usual other top scorer Ma'an Odeh was held to only four points and Ashraf Samara to eight.

In a post-match statement head coach Murad Barakat attributed the loss to exhaustion and bad luck. "This was their seventh game in eight days. The players lacked concentration and were unlucky in shooting from the three point range. Still it was a good game and we played an excellent first half."

Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) Deputy Chairman Samir Janakat praised the newly re-grouped team playing their first international tournament.

"Our players found themselves playing the top Asian teams who have a lot more experience. No one can underestimate titleholders China or runners up South Korea. It is still a big achievement for us," he said.

The only Arab team in the 15-nation competition, the Jordanian team scored impressive results in the championship which concludes today. In the first round, they beat Hong Kong 71-24 and Singapore 88-35. In the quarterfinals round, they scored a spectacular 72-71 win over hosts the Philippines before losing to China 88-49. They beat Japan 73-56 to move to the semifinals.

No baseball 'Team Dream' in '96

ATLANTA (AFP) — Assembling a baseball "Dream Team" among U.S. professionals is hopeless for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, it could become reality by the 2000 Sydney Games, U.S. Olympic coach skip Bertman said.

"It looks like a dead end for 1996," said Bertman. "But some time in the future, it's likely to happen."

The idea would allow top U.S. Latin American players to represent their home-lands, with U.S. backers hopeful of duplicating the "Dream Team" gold medal performance in basketball from the 1992 Barcelona Games.

A strike by U.S. major leaguers has killed hopes of pulling the event together, with opening ceremonies 500 days away and scheduled for the heart of the U.S. season.

College and amateur players will comprise the U.S. squad, which plans a 32-game U.S. tour that features nine games against Australia in July, four more against South Korea in June against Nicaragua and a seven-game series against Cuba commencing on the U.S. Independence Day, July 4.

Cruyff threatens to quit Barcelona

PARIS (AFP) — Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff is threatening to quit because of a campaign he claims is being waged against his son Jordi.

The Dutchman, who has taken the Catalan club to the top in European football, is upset over recent stories about the 20-year-old son who he promoted to Barcelona's first team this season.

In one article, local daily Avui claimed Cruyff was demanding a contract worth around 100 million pesetas (\$800,000) a year for Jordi. "It's totally false," he told regional daily El Periodico. "It is a malevolent campaign. I will not stand for people attacking Jordi in order to get at me."

"If things continue like this, I'll have to reconsider my position," he added. "I've always said that if I'm not wanted, it'll be no problem for me to leave. I might even leave before I'm asked to."

Jordi, a talented striker, made a promising start to the season but has since lost his form. In recent matches, he has been whistled off the pitch by Barcelona fans. His father has brought Barcelona immense success on the pitch — consecutive league titles 1991-94, plus the European Cup and Super Cup in 1992 — but has been

criticised for an autocratic style. However, his thoughts of departure prompted a crisis meeting between the Dutchman and club vice-president, Joan Gaspart.

Cruyff's men will have to put the controversy behind them on Saturday when they face Atletico Madrid, the team who knocked them out of this season's Spanish Cup. More importantly, they must be prepared psychologically for their European Cup quarter-final second leg against Paris St. Germain Wednesday.

League leaders Real Madrid travel to Racing Santander.

Italian football will be hoping that the weekend passes off without incident, after another spate of stabbings broke out in midweek.

Four navy conscripts were on their way to Wednesday's Italian Cup semifinal between Lazio and Juventus when they were attacked by a knife-wielding gang. The sailors were not seriously hurt, police said, although one received deep wounds. The incident followed the stabbing to death on January

29 of a young Genoa supporter, Vincenzo Spagnolo, before Genoa's league match against AC Milan. The match was abandoned at half-time and a week later all Italian sports fixtures were called off for one day.

Serie A leaders Juventus are home to Foggia on Sunday, while second placed Parma have a trickier task when they host Sampdoria.

Third-placed Lazio, who crushed Fiorentina 8-2 last weekend, travel to Napoli. The race for the Bundesliga title has meanwhile been thrown open by Borussia Dortmund's first league de-

EUROPEAN SOCCER

Beaten 1-0 by FC Kaiserslautern, Dortmund are at home to Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday with only a two point cushion over Werder Bremen, who play Freiburg on Friday.

In France, second-placed Paris St. Germain are giving the weekend fixtures a miss, in order to prepare for their game against Barcelona at the Parc Des Princes, while invincible leaders Nantes take their record unbeaten of 28 matches to Bordeaux.

Al Faisali lose to Al Ahli in opening match

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's Al Faisali lost 1-0 to Egyptian champions Al Ahli in the opening match of the 5th Arab Cup Winners' Championship which kicked off in Cairo Friday.

Al Faisali are grouped with Al Ahli, Qatar's Al Arabi,

and Al Mastaqbal of Tunis in Group A. Group B includes titleholders Olympic of Morocco, Al Shahab of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait's Al Qadisiyah and Rafah of Palestine. Al Faisali will now have to win both their upcoming matches to move to the semifinals of the competition.

Spurs beat Cavs on last-second inbounds play

CLEVELAND (R) — For the San Antonio Spurs, it was last-second perfection, but for the Cleveland Cavaliers, it was a mental lapse that caused them to come up short — literally.

Sean Elliott's layup off an inbounds pass from Doc Rivers with one second left lifted the Spurs to a 100-98 victory over the Cavaliers on Thursday.

After the Cleveland's Ter-

rell Brandon missed a 15-footer, the Spurs grabbed the rebound and called timeout with one second to go. San Antonio moved to midcourt for the inbounds pass and Rivers found Elliott under the basket for the game-winner.

"The play couldn't have worked more perfectly," said San Antonio coach Bob Hill. "Doc Rivers made a great pass."

David Robinson scored nine of his 26 points in the final 3:20 as the Spurs, the hottest team in the NBA, won for the ninth time in their last 10 games.

Terrell Brandon scored 24 points and Tony Campbell added 21 for Cleveland, which has lost five of its last six games.

Cleveland used a 16-4 burst to erase a six-point deficit and take a 94-88 lead when Danny Ferry hit a 3-pointer with 4:11 to play. The Spurs countered with an 8-2 run to tie the game at 96-96 as Robinson scored seven

points. "I'm sorry for the team," said Cleveland coach Mike Fratello. "They worked very hard against an outstanding club and came up a little bit short."

In Charlotte, Alonzo Mourning scored 13 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter to lift the Hornets to their fourth win in five games, a 112-99 triumph over the Seattle SuperSonics.

Mourning connected on 12-of-20 from the field, hauled in 13 rebounds and blocked six shots as the Hornets won their fourth in a row at home.

بركات Furniture

Would like to invite you at our Iranian carpets exhibition, direct from Iran, at the Forte Grand Hotel, Housing Bank Centre, starting from Friday March 10, till Sunday March 12.

From 11 a.m. till 8:00 p.m.
For more information contact Barakat Exhibition for General Trading
Al Jubelha 845487
Housing Bank 696575

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG TALENTED MUSICIANS

New Al Hussein Foundation

The National Music Conservatory and The American Center

are offering a full scholarship to the 1995 Apple Hill Chamber Music Summer School And Festival from July 30 to August 28, 1995 New Hampshire, USA

Candidates should be able to:

- Play a western classical instrument as a soloist and within ensembles (preferably a string instrument).
- Sight read music.
- Communicate in English.

A performance of three compositions from different periods, ranging in styles, should be submitted on cassette by the candidate. One of the compositions should be from the repertoire of Chamber Music.

Application forms are available at: The National Music Conservatory, Atiyat Building, behind the Embassy of Kuwait, Jabal Amman, tel. 687620.

Deadline: Tuesday, 14 March 1995

ATHEER

Trans.
Advertis.
Design.

Jabal Al Husein - TeleFax: 612485

Maman

DESIGNER CLOTHES FOR THE MOTHER-TO-BE & SOFT FURNISHINGS

... Would like to announce the arrival of an exciting new fashion concept, designer clothes for the Mother-To-Be.

Look your best with our inspiring collection of maternity wear for working days, weekends and evenings.

Also, come see our exclusive range of handmade quilts and unique gifts for the new-born.

Jabal Amman, Abdoun Circle
Tel. 861281
Sat. Thur
10:00-1:00
3:00-7:00

GRAND OPENING
Sunday 12/3/1995

Sampras, Agassi will play Davis Cup

INDIAN WELLS (Agencies) — Top-ranked Pete Sampras and second-ranked Andre Agassi, looking beyond their battle for number one, have agreed to play for the U.S. Davis Cup team in its second-round tie against Italy later this month, team captain Tom Gullikson announced on Thursday.

"This is something very special to the U.S. and it speaks volumes about these two guys at a time that they are battling for number one that they would go to Italy and play Davis Cup," said Gullikson, flanked by the two American stars.

The announcement was something of a surprise as both players said at the beginning of the year they would sit out the first two rounds of Davis Cup in pursuit of the number one ranking.

The U.S. team defeated France in the first round of the 1995 competition without Sampras and Agassi.

The March 31-April 2 tie in Palermo, Italy, will mark the first time that Sampras and Agassi have played for the United States together since 1992, the last time the American captured the Davis Cup, beating Switzerland.

Both players said the decision was tough and that committing to this tie with Italy meant that they would continue on the U.S. team for the rest of 1995.

"It's something that we've both put a lot of emotion into deciding," Agassi said. "There was a time I was adamant about not playing, and Pete also felt it wasn't in our best interest."

Said Sampras: "Andre called me a couple of weeks ago and asked me. I thought it over and we discussed and decided to go for it."

Graf advances to quarterfinals

Delray Beach, Florida

Steffi Graf, struggling at the start but overpowering at the end, beat Nicole Pietrangeli 6-4, 6-1 to reach the quarterfinals of the Delray Beach winter championships.

Bradtko, an Australian who in three months has risen 98 spots in the rankings, to No. 54, led 3-1 before the German star reeled off 10 of the next 11 games.

Graf, the defending champion, won her 17th consecutive match at the Delray tournament. She ended the 19-minute second set and match with an ace.

"I needed a few games to keep moving and she started off well," said Graf, 6-0 in the world rankings. "I needed a few minutes to get in the groove."

TENNIS ROUNDUP

Earlier, Brenda Schultz, her big serve undermined by swirling winds, beat Ai Sugiyama 6-4, 7-5 in the second round. The 6-foot-2 Dutchwoman, who lives half the year in Delray Beach, has the fastest serve on the women's tour at 115 mph.

"If there's no wind it's totally different the way I put my serve in," she said. "You can't play good tennis in this."

In a match delayed because of rain for four hours, Spain's Conchita Martinez, the No. 2 seed, defeated Catalina Cristea of Romania 6-0, 6-2.

Ruxandra Dragomir ousted Romanian compatriot Irina Spilca, the No. 7 seed, 6-1, 6-2. Russia's Elena Likhovtseva Eliminated No. 10 Marianne Werdell Wilmeyer of San Diego 6-3, 6-4.

Mary Joe Fernandez of Miami withdrew from singles because of flu symptoms. Fernandez won the rain-delayed singles championship

at the Ever Cup in Indian Wells, Calif., last Monday.

Agassi routs Wilander

Andre Agassi, bidding to become the world's No. 1 player, routed Mats Wilander 6-0, 6-2 in the second of the Newsweek Champion Cup. Agassi, ranked No. 2 and seeded second in this tournament behind top-ranked Pete Sampras, needed only 58 minutes to dispose of Wilander, himself a former No. 1 player.

If Agassi wins this tournament and Sampras is eliminated early, Agassi would ascend to No. 1.

"I want to play the best tennis in the world every time I'm on the court," Agassi said. "A few guys hope for that. If it happens this week

or next week or whatever, it's like, you just stick to your game plan and hope for the best. This has been a pretty fantastic year to date."

Agassi has won 16 of his 17 matches this year and captured the Australian Open and San Jose Open. His only loss was to Thomas Enqvist of Sweden in the semifinals of last month's U.S. Indoor in Philadelphia.

Agassi will get another shot at Enqvist in the third round. The Swede advanced by upsetting No. 16 seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic 6-2, 7-5.

In other second-round play, No. 3 seed Boris Becker of Germany beat Jared Palmer 6-4, 6-4. No. 4 Michael Chang beat Guy Forget of France 6-3, 6-2. No. 5 Albert Berasategui of Spain topped Fabrice Santoro of France 6-3, 6-4. No. 6 Michael Stich of Germany struggled to a 1-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 victory over Richey Reneberg.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA URSCH

©1994 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

CONVENTIONS: MAYBE!

Both vulnerable, North deals.

NORTH ♠ E 10 8 5

♥ 3

♦ A K 10 7 5 4

♣ J 10

WEST ♠ 9 2

♥ J 8 6

♦ 10 8 6 4

♣ Q 9 3

EAST ♠ J 8 6

♥ A Q J 8 7 5

♦ Q 8 3

♣ 8 3

SOUTH ♠ A Q 7 4

♥ K 2

♦ J 2

♣ Q 9 7 6 5

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♠ 1 ♠ 2 ♠

2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass

4 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

If there is one convention we go

dore without reservation, it is Alvin Ruff's creation, the Negative Double. But even that is not an unmitigated blessing. When this hand was played in an international match, the U.S. player in the South seat made a negative double over East's overall and as a result North became declarer at four spades.

The defense was straightforward and deadly. East led the ace of hearts and had no trouble finding the club with East won the king and then continued with a third club. If declarer ruffed with the ten

in the closed hand, East would over-ruff for the setting trick. If declarer ruffed high, that established a trump for the enemy—down one. When Philadelphia's Arthur Robinson and Robert Jordan held the East-West cards, the bidding went as shown, putting the defense

to a sterner test. North judged well to raise South's invitational bid of two no trump to four spades despite the fact that he held a minimum in terms of high cards.

Robinson, West, started things off with the king of clubs. Most Easts would have echoed with the eight. West would have continued with ace and another club, but instead of ruffing, declarer would have discarded a heart from the board. East's ruff would have been the third and last trick for the defense.

Unfortunately, for declarer, Jordan followed to the first trick with the three of clubs. West dutifully refrained from leading another club, switching to a heart. In with the ace, Jordan reverted to clubs and the ace of clubs and another restored parity—down one.

China to bid for 2004 Olympics

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Beijing is poised to bid for the 2004 Olympic Games, a senior International Olympic Committee (IOC) official confirmed Friday.

The Chinese bid is expected to be announced when IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch is in the country for the World Table Tennis Championships in May.

The decision comes less than two years after Beijing failed in their attempt to host the 2000 Games — losing to Sydney in the final run-off by only two votes.

"The Chinese studied their defeat very very closely and have carried out a detailed examination of their chances of winning the 2004 Games," said the IOC official, here for the Pan-American Games.

"They have decided to make a bid," he added. IOC sources say that once Beijing formally launches its bid most of the other cities considering hosting Games will withdraw.

The main threat to Beijing is likely to come from Cape Town but the South African city's Olympic hopes received a severe blow earlier this month when the main financial backer withdrew.

Businessman Raymond Ackermann, chairman of one of South Africa's biggest retail groups, pulled out over a dispute with the Cape Town city council over who should present the bid — Ackermann's present organising committee of the city council.

Samaranch, who has never hidden the fact he has a certain sympathy for a Beijing bid, would also like to see the Games go to Africa, especially to South Africa and his close friend President Nelson Mandela.

But most observers believe Beijing will be hard to beat for the 2004 Games.

Their narrow defeat by Sydney and the lessons they have learnt in putting forward a bid have put them in a strong position but IOC officials admit that a Beijing-Cape Town battle could be as close as the Beijing-Sydney struggle for the 2000 Games.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
Eddie Murphy in Beverly Hills Cop 3 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Honey, I Blew Up The Kid Jean-Claude Van Damm TimeCop Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Comedian star: Adel Imam — Bakhit & Andadileh Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 CONCORD '2' Jean-Claude Van Damm STREET FIGHTER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00		Mousa Hilazini "Sumaah" In the political comedy "Hi Citizen" Author and Director: Mohammad Al Shawaqfeh Daily starting 8:30 p.m. Monday is the weekly holiday	Presents Abu Awwad In the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

Celtics to sue Wall Street Journal over Reggie Lewis story

BOSTON (R) — The Boston Celtics said Thursday it will file \$100 million lawsuit against the Wall Street Journal for a story which said the National Basketball Association team ignored suspected cocaine use by former team captain Reggie Lewis, who died of heart failure in 1993.

Celtics chairman Paul Gaston blasted the article, which appeared in Thursday's Wall Street Journal, calling the charges "ludicrous, shameful and disgusting."

Gaston said he was "shocked, appalled and outraged" by the story, which said that financial and public relations interests and the payment of a \$15 million, life insurance policy kept the team from giving Lewis proper care after he collapsed during a playoff game April 29, 1993.

"It's not my nature to be litigious, however I can not sit here and let a national and international publication defame Reggie and the Celtics to the extent that has happened today," Gaston told a news conference.

"We intend to sue the reporter, Ron Suskind, the Wall Street Journal and its parent Dow Jones Co. Inc. for \$100 million."

In the article, Suskind wrote: "What is evident: the official cause of death, a heart damaged by the common-cold virus, is a medically non-sensical finding by a coroner who was under intense pressure from the Lewis family to exclude any implication of drug use."

More than \$15 million in insurance coverage of Lewis' contract reportedly would be paid out only if no drugs were involved in his death, the journal reported.

"Any allegation or insinuation that economic or monetary concerns could have conceivably played a role in any care that Reggie Lewis got are absolutely ludicrous. They're worse than ludicrous, they're shameful and disgusting," Gaston said.

Lewis' widow, Donna Harris-Lewis, called the Wall Street Journal story "totally irresponsible."

"He was a model citizen," Harris-Lewis said of her late husband. "This is how I shall remember him. Reggie did not use drugs. I repeat, Reggie did not use drugs."

After Lewis collapsed during the playoff game, doctors found three black patches on his heart, which they felt could only be caused by arteriosclerosis — mostly found in older patients — viruses, a previous heart attack or cocaine use, the article said.

Tests narrowed the possible causes down and raised suspicions about drug use, but Lewis denied taking cocaine and the team never tested him for the drug.

The article suggested that while the NBA boasts it will expel any player found using drugs, it was more concerned with avoiding a scandal than in testing for suspected drug use by its star players.

The league took exception to the article and also issued a statement of condemnation.

"It's obvious to any reader that this article is based entirely on speculation and has no real factual basis," NBA deputy commissioner Russ Granik said.

"Furthermore, there is no conceivable way that the NBA's anti-drug programme had anything to do with the issue of whether Reggie Lewis was tested or could have been tested upon his admission to the hospital."

Gaston said any proceeds from the lawsuit would be donated to a memorial established for the late star, whose number 35 will be retired by the team in a ceremony later this month.

Lewis died on July 27, 1993 at the age of 27 after collapsing while shooting baskets with friends at Brandeis University.

Pesaro, Bologna in control

ROME (R) — Italian sides Pesaro and Bologna relied on foreign talent for wins over Limoges and Panathinaikos in their European Champion Clubs Basketball quarter-final, first legs on Thursday.

Americans Corey Gaines and Dean Garrett led Pesaro to a convincing 66-55 win over their French opponents while Serb Predrag Danilovic scored 24 points to power Bologna to an 85-68 success over the Greeks.

After an exciting first half that finished 26-26 in Pesaro, sharp playmaker Gaines, who had a team-best 17 points, spurred a second-half scoring spree which stunned ex-champions Limoges and sent the partisan crowd into a frenzy.

It culminated in an amazing fall-away three-pointer from the far corner by veteran Italian forward Antonello Riva from his first shot of the game.

Forward Michael Young scored a game-high 28 points for the French.

In Bologna, Danilovic showed why he may end up in the NBA, leading the Italians with 17 points in the first half and five assists after the interval.

'Michael Jordan to return to NBA'

CHICAGO (Agencies) — Michael Jordan, estranged from the sport he adopted, is returning to the game he once ruled, a source told the Associated Press on Thursday night.

"He's done with baseball," said the source, speaking on the condition he not be identified. "He's going to play basketball."

Jordan practiced again with the Chicago Bulls Thursday, the third straight day he appeared at team headquarters, and will shortly trade in his baseball spikes for a new pair of Air Jordan basketball shoes.

"It won't be tonight, tomorrow or the next day," the source said. "But it will be soon...he's going to take couple of weeks to tune up."

Jordan retired suddenly about a month before the 1993-94 season. Though he has stayed in shape playing baseball, he "wants to make sure he's near the top of his game," the source said.

The ESPN cable television network also reported Thursday night that Jordan is returning. The network, citing a "reliable" but unidentified source, said he will come back, but not for a couple of weeks. ESPN said Jordan is intent on being in good shape and wants to discuss the future of the Bulls with team management.

It was unclear how Jordan would fit under the Bulls' salary cap. He has two years remaining on a contract reportedly paying him \$4 million.

"He won't rush back to improve the (team's) playoff position," the source told the AP. "It doesn't matter to him as much whether they play the No. 1 or 2 seed as whether he's in real good shape."

After the Bulls' two-hour practice, Jordan drove off in his Range Rover without comment. And spokesman for the Bulls, the Chicago White Sox and Jordan's agent said no announcement was forthcoming.

Jackson said the distraction of Jordan's possible return made it tough for the Bulls to remain focused, but might help energize a lethargic team.

Jordan, 32, led the Bulls to NBA titles in 1991, 1992 and



Michael Jordan warms up before a training workout with the Chicago White Sox earlier this month (AFP photo)

1993. He then shocked the sports world on Oct. 6, 1993, retiring with a 32.3-point scoring average, the best in league history. Jordan said he had "reached the pinnacle," had nothing left to prove and just wanted to "watch the grass grow."

Rather than kicking back, however, Jordan provided another surprise a few months later when he announced he'd try to play baseball with the White Sox, who are owned by Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf.

Jordan, who hadn't played baseball since high school, batted a low .202 at the

double-A Birmingham Minor League team last season. He went to spring training hoping to move up to triple-A Nashville this season, but the major league players' strike left him in limbo and he returned to Chicago.

He missed one deadline for reporting to minor league camp in Sarasota, Florida. General Manager Ron Schuler said Thursday that if Jordan didn't report by Saturday, "I'd guess that he'd be retired."

Jordan, who practiced with the Bulls a few times before spring training without draw-

ing much attention, showed up Tuesday and watched films with Jackson and the other coaches.

Jordan then worked out with the team Wednesday and Thursday.

Jordan, whose number 23 has been retired and who has been honoured by a statue outside the new United Centre, was the first player on the court Thursday morning. He shot baskets with Toni Kukoc before the rest of the Bulls joined in. Jordan was wearing a white sleeveless Bulls T-shirt, a pair of red shorts and white Nikes.

Privalova aims for record at first 400 attempt

BARCELONA (R) — Irina Privalova, Europe's top woman sprinter, will attempt the world indoor 400 metres record this weekend in her first competitive outing over the exacting two-lap event.

The 26-year-old Russian, who broke the world 50 metres indoor record last month en route to equalling her own 60 metres world mark, confessed on Thursday it had not been her decision to step into unknown territory at the fifth World Indoor Championships which started on Friday.

"It was not my decision," Privalova explained at a news conference. "My coach said I have won the 60 metres and the 200 metres (at world indoor championships)."

"It would be interesting to become the first person to win all three. It will be the first time I have run over 400 metres. I will be running to break the world record."

The present mark of 49.59 seconds was set by Czech Jarmila Kratochvilova 13 years ago.

Privalova will be competing against world outdoor champion Jearl Miles, the only Olympic or world champion included in an under-strength U.S. team.

The American squad, which does not include Michael Johnson who has broken the world indoor 400 metres record twice this year, was further weakened this week when 1991 world outdoor 400 champion Antonio Pettigrew withdrew.

But it includes exciting hurdler Allen Johnson, who ended the 44-race winning streak of Britain's world high hurdles champion and record-holder Colin Jackson last month.

Johnson, 24, a quietly-spoken sociology student who sports a gold ear-ring in his left ear and a gold stud in his right, said on Thursday beating Jackson had given him a lot of confidence.

"It was something that showed me I can run against anybody and win against anybody," Johnson said.

Jackson is one of a number of top competitors who have decided not to run here and in his absence Johnson identified his main threats as Austria's Olympic champion Mark McKoy and Britain's world outdoor silver medalist Tony Jarrett.

Nine Olympic champions and 10 world outdoor gold medalists have entered for the three-day event, including Spain's Olympic 1,500 metres champion Fermín Cacho.

Cacho, matched by King Juan Carlos who met International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) chief Primo Nebilo in Madrid on Thursday, won a memorable race at the Barcelona Olympics three years ago.

IAAF spokesman Christopher Wimmer said it was still uncertain if Burundi's Venuste Niyongabo would compete after he turned up here without a visa for Spain.

Niyongabo, winner of the dream mile in Oslo last year, was scheduled to run the 3,000 but after being interrogated by immigration officials for three hours on arrival decided to fly back to his training base in Italy.

Niyongabo, winner of the dream mile in Oslo last year, was scheduled to run the 3,000 but after being interrogated by immigration officials for three hours on arrival decided to fly back to his training base in Italy.

Deluxe Furnished Apartment For Rent

Location: Shmeisani. Grand deluxe building. 3 bedrooms, salon, sitting, dining, tel, separate central heating, lift. Rent JD 7,500 per annum including services.

Ref. owner Arch. W. Abidi, Tel. 664950-698100 9 a.m.-2 p.m. — 5-8 p.m.

FURNISHED ROOF APARTMENT FOR RENT

A furnished apartment consists of 3 bedrooms, sitting room, large salons with balcony, large kitchen, 3 bathrooms, telephone, separate central heating and elevator. Yearly rent only.

Location: Um Uthainah, Jeezan Str. Bldg. No. (15).

For more details; Pls. call No. 666034 from 10:30 a.m. till 1:30 p.m. only

Stojko keeps figure skating crown

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — Canadian Elvis Stojko retained his figure skating title Thursday night, after a sparkling performance in the free programme.

Stojko, the Olympic silver medalist at Lillehammer, had been trailing American Todd Eldredge after the short programme but overtook his rival in a thrilling climax to the event.

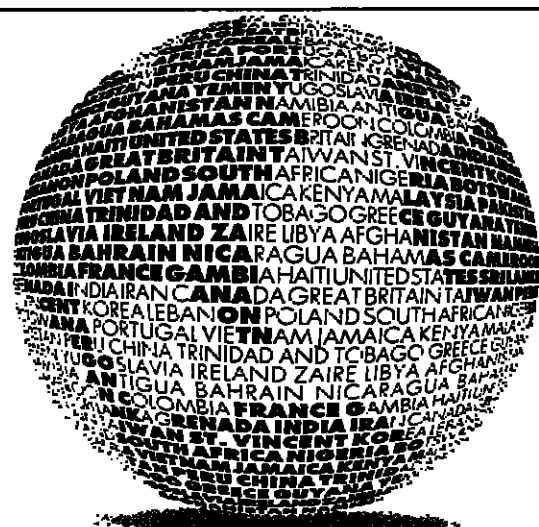
Eldredge took the silver and Frenchman Philippe Candeloro, who had been struggling in fifth place, the bronze.

It was a fairytale ending for the Canadian, who tore ankle ligaments seven weeks ago but was determined to defend his crown, however, painful that might be.

Even 10 days ago, he refused to try out the more complicated parts of his routine, for fear of injury.

Undaunted on the big night, he even attempted a quadruple jump, which did not come off, as he skated to victory in the free programme — to roars of approval from the British crowd.

But perfect eight triple jumps in an exceptional performance — ensured that he leaptfrogged over Eldredge into the gold medal position.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEDICAL STUDENTS. AND WE'RE LOOKING EVERYWHERE.

The best candidates for physicians are bright, determined, strong, empathetic. And we're determined to find them. St. George's University now offers a premedical course leading into the School of Medicine. The course includes varying points of entry, depending on your educational background and achievements. All courses are in English. Our campuses are located in Grenada and St. Vincent, with affiliated hospitals in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Caribbean. If you believe you can meet our standards for excellence, contact: Office of Admissions, Dept. AJ05, St. George's University School of Medicine, c/o the North American Correspondent, Medical School Services, Ltd. One East Main Street, Bay Shore, New York 11706-8399 516-665-8500 • 800-899-6337 • Fax: 516-665-5590



St. George's University

Shaping the world...one mind at a time

Friendly People... Superior Service



ANZ Grindlays Bank

Shmeisani - Tel.: 660201-7, 660301-5 Fax: 679115
P.O.Box: 9997 Amman - Jordan

UNRWA satisfied with results of Amman talks

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) concluded a two-day informal meeting of major donors and host governments here Thursday with a consensus on crucial questions regarding the agency's future and pledges of financial support from several donor countries, UNRWA officials said.

"The meeting went very well and we are pleased with the outcome," UNRWA's Commissioner-General Iltis Turkmen told a press conference Thursday evening. "The (meeting's) purpose was not to elicit exact donations; rather the purpose was to propose our five-year planning horizon to donor countries and to gain a convergence of opinion in questions specific to the perspective of UNRWA, he said.

The five-year formula is aligned with the schedule delineated in the declaration of principles (DoP) that was signed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on Sept. 13, 1993.

The meeting here was the first to be held in Jordan after the signing of the DoP.

The DoP calls for five years of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Negotiations on the final status of the territories is to begin no later than the third year of self-rule.

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho

went under Palestinian autonomy in May 1994. Israel and the PLO are negotiating the expansion of self-rule to the rest of the West Bank.

With the setting up of a Palestinian self-rule authority in the Gaza Strip, the PLO also called for and secured U.N. agreement to moving the UNRWA headquarters to the Mediterranean strip from Vienna, Austria.

UNRWA, set up in 1950, provides education, health and social services to Palestinian refugees scattered in camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. With the signing of the Israel-PLO autonomy accord, the U.N. agency also undertook to implement programmes financed by the international community which has made pledges of \$2.4 billion to help the Palestinians for five years starting 1994. These projects are classified under a so-called Peace Implementation Programme (PIP).

A statement made available to the Jordan Times after the Wednesday/Thursday meeting in Amman said that delegates from donor countries and host governments "felt the need to reassure the refugee community, the host governments and UNRWA staff of their continuing support to the agency until an agreed solution to the problems of refugees is found."

It added that delegates also commended UNRWA's five-year plan as an "innovative

and sound framework for planning the agency's activities in the coming period."

In the course of the meeting, the agency presented to donors and host governments its plan which included projected expenditures during those five years. Having highlighted priorities, the agency proposed the financial requirements for its objectives.

"Participants (in the meeting) endorsed the five-year plan... and have taken notice of it as a basis for expenditure," said Mr. Turkmen, who emphasised the plan was "not linked to a five-year solution."

Mr. Turkmen said that the delegates recognised the importance of UNRWA in the stability of the region and that they affirmed the necessity for the agency to continue its education, health and social services at their present levels.

UNRWA sustained a budget deficit of \$12 million in 1994, and it was feared that if contributions fall short of the agency's expenditure again, then services would have to be dramatically reduced.

Mr. Turkmen told the Jordan Times on Wednesday that the agency had exhausted its operational reserves.

Mr. Turkmen said Thursday that delegates were "worried about (the agency's) budget deficit and feared it would be worse this

(Continued on page 7)

Algeria bomb wounds 33

ALGIERS (Agencies) — A car bomb exploded at dawn Friday in an Algiers police housing complex, wounding 33 people as they slept, following a warning from a radical Algerian Islamic group threatening to attack women linked to the security forces.

Timed at dawn on Friday when most Algerians are at home, the attack appeared to mark a new escalation in the fundamentalists' three-year campaign of terror to oust the military-backed government.

It was the first attack of its size against a so-called civilian target, housing women and children. Eight children were among the wounded.

"We wanted to get out, but there were flames in front of the building," the wife of a policeman said. Her baby daughter escaped with scratches.

The bomb blew up between two buildings on the Garidi estate for police officers and their families in the working-class suburb of Kouba, a fundamentalist stronghold.

It tore off the facade of a four-floor building, sending furniture flying and was heard in the city centre three kilometres away, but authorities said the toll would have been far worse if the build-

ings had collapsed.

Security forces initially reported 33 injured, and the figure was later confirmed by officials.

It was the second major car-bombing in six weeks in Algeria, which has been wracked by a three-year insurgency waged by Islamic militants seeking to topple the army-backed government. On Jan. 30, a bomb-rigged car exploded outside Algiers' main police station, killing 42 people and wounding 286.

The headline Armed Islamic Group claimed responsibility for that car bombing and threatened further attacks by suicide bombers. It also has threatened to avenge the deaths of 96 prisoners, most of them Islamic militants, killed by security forces quelling a mutiny last month at Serkadji prison in Algiers.

In its latest threat, the Armed Islamic Group threatened Friday to kill the wives of police and army officers unless women detained for collaborating with the militants are freed.

The threat was published on the front page of Al Hayat, an Arab-language daily based in London and Beirut.

The Armed Islamic Group, which has used Al Hayat to publicise previous state-

ments, is one of two headline guerrilla groups waging an insurgency since 1992 aimed at installing an Islamic state. The violence began after military authorities cancelled parliamentary elections that Islamic fundamentalists were expected to win.

More than 30,000 people have been killed in the conflict, including hundreds of intellectuals, journalists, civic leaders and foreigners targeted for assassination by the militants.

The Armed Islamic Group statement, signed by its leader Abu Abdul Rahman Amin, set Friday as the deadline for announcing on radio and television that it would release women charged with aiding the militants.

The statement said the government, having failed to crush the group's fighters, were "seeking to take revenge on women of the believers... violating all values of virtue and forgetting that molesting the honour of a single Muslim woman is an unforgivable affront to all Muslims."

If the detained women were not released unconditionally, the group threatened to take revenge "by killing the wives of army and police tyrants and their assistants."

Duma fires head of human rights panel

MOSCOW (R) — The lower house of Russia's parliament on Friday dismissed human rights commissioner Sergei Kovalyov, a former Soviet dissident and fierce opponent of the Kremlin's bloody campaign to crush separatism in Chechnya.

The State Duma approved a resolution by 240 votes to 75 effectively removing Mr. Kovalyov from his post after conservative deputies accused him of bias and of overstepping his mandate.

"Sergei Kovalyov can have no responsibility for human rights. He wants to bring foreign troops in Russia," said ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, referring to Mr. Kovalyov's calls for international monitors to be sent to Chechnya.

Prominent hardliner Sergei Baburin, who led the attack on Mr. Kovalyov, said his "appeals to the entire world to put pressure on Russia cause us great sorrow."

A handful of liberals defended his action. "Kovalyov is more honest, noble and pure than anyone speaking here, myself included," said Vladimir Lukin, chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee.

It was not immediately clear whether the vote deprived Mr. Kovalyov of all his duties.

He holds a similar position as head of a human rights commission appointed in 1993 by President Yeltsin.

The president's office declined to comment on the

vote.

Mr. Kovalyov, 64, was convicted of anti-Soviet activity and spent seven years as a political prisoner in a Ural Mountains camp.

He was a close associate of human rights campaigner Andrei Sakharov and headed a human rights commission in the dying days of Soviet Russia's parliament at the beginning of the 1990s.

In Genoa, Italy, Mr. Kovalyov described his sacking as a personal vendetta by communists and ultra-nationalists.

He also told a conference on the post-cold war world in northwest Italy, where he learned of his dismissal, that he would continue to work in a similar position as head of a human rights commission appointed in 1993 by President Boris Yeltsin.

The chairman of the Duma's defence committee tendered his resignation on Friday in protest at the dismissal of Mr. Kovalyov, his aide said.

"He offered to resign but this decision has still to be approved by parliament," the aide to Sergei Yushenkov said. He added that Mr. Yushenkov remained committee chairman.

Meanwhile a delegation of top European foreign ministers held talks with President Yeltsin on Thursday, three days after the European Union held up a trade deal with Moscow because of the war in Chechnya.

Talibans, Shiites clash

KABUL (AFP) — Tank and infantry fights broke out between gunmen of the Afghan militant Taliban movement and a Shiite faction based in southwest Kabul Friday, according to Defence Ministry sources.

"The Taliban started fighting with the Shiites around the old Russian embassy and Darulaman Palace," a Defence Ministry source told AFP.

He said the fighting started after the Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat faction refused to surrender their heavy weapons as demanded by the Taliban.

"The Taliban are trying to disarm Wahdat now," said the defence ministry source.

The Taliban entered the Shiite-controlled southwest of Kabul at the invitation of Hezb-e-Wahdat Wednesday afternoon apparently on the understanding that they would be taking over Shiite frontlines and heavy weapons.

However, it appeared that Hezb-e-Wahdat commanders wanted to use the Taliban to bolster their frontline defences in the five-day fighting with forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

"Wahdat hoped to use the Taliban as a way out of their imminent defeat by our forces," claimed the Defence Ministry informant.



VINTAGE POSTERS: A Christie's auctioneer takes bids for a poster advertising the Humphrey Bogart movie 'The African Queen' during a sale of vintage film posters in London on Thursday. The poster, one of many from the Mel Tormé collection, fetched about \$925 (AFP wire photo)

Body of 5-year-old found in cesspool

By Rama Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The body of a five-year-old boy who has been reported missing since March 5 was found Friday in a cesspool in Tafleh, police and civil defence department (CDD) sources said.

Hazem A.F. was from Abu Banna village near Tafleh. Police and CDD rescue units had combed the mountain area around Tafleh in the past few days but could not trace the boy.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the authorities received a "tip-off" that the child might be in a cesspool and "based on the information we started pumping sewage out of the cesspools around the town."

"After pumping the contents of the cesspool for two hours we recovered the body of the toddler," the official said.

A Tafleh police official who was contacted by the Jordan Times Friday night said that the body of the boy had been in the pool

for at least three days. The official, however, declined to give further details into the case until the investigation procedures are over.

The victim's body was transferred to Prince Zaid Hospital for examination and for an autopsy.

"At this time we can't say if the boy was murdered or he just fell in the cesspool. Hopefully the autopsy will reveal the truth," the police official said.

Also on Friday, CDD frogmen were searching for two men both aged 19, who were reported to have drowned in the Hidan area in Madaba.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that rescue operations were halted after sunset because the area was too dark.

"Even if we use lights to search for them it will not be enough. We will have to wait until tomorrow," the CDD official said.

The official, however, would not reveal the names of the two missing people or the nature of the drowning incident.

Norway urges donors to pay for Mideast peace

OSLO (R) — Norway, which chairs an international consortium for aid to the Palestinian self-rule areas, on Friday sent rich donor countries an urgent reminder to pay up or risk undermining the Middle East peace process.

The "Holst Peace Fund," set up to help the Palestinians pay for the day-to-day costs of self-rule in Gaza and West Bank, is empty.

Oslo has no means to force donor countries to meet their obligations and can only appeal to their conscience.

"The international community could risk seeing the peace process collapsing (if they don't pay)," Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Godal told Reuters in an interview.

On Friday he sent reminders to eight countries which had failed to come up with \$3.1 million, or 28 per cent, of the \$115 million pledged to the World Bank's "Holst Peace Fund" in the current budget period which expires on April 1.

Mr. Godal declined to name these nations but World Bank sources earlier this month said Canada and some European and Middle Eastern countries had not met their obligations.

"We will not expose them

yet," said Mr. Godal, whose country this week transferred another \$3 million to the fund.

"Unless all the donors honour their pledges immediately, urgent payments to the Palestinian authorities may not be made in time, leaving people without salaries," Mr. Godal said in the reminder.

"Needless to say, a failure to remedy this situation immediately could easily undermine the prospects of political stability and long-term development in the Palestinian areas."

Mr. Godal said international donors, the World Bank, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as well as the International Monetary Fund and the U.N. planned to hold an informal meeting in Washington on March 30.

Norway also intends to send a letter to all donors informing them of the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank, where living conditions for ordinary Palestinians seem to be deteriorating.

Mr. Godal said the previous full Israeli closure of its former occupied territories cost Palestinians some \$2 million a day in lost income.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudis allow Jordanians to bring families

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has lifted a ban on Jordanian and Palestinian workers bringing in their families that dates back to the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, informed sources here said Friday. They said that Jordanians and Palestinians employed in the kingdom would from Saturday be allowed to bring in their wives and children. After the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that led to the Gulf war, Saudi authorities banned visas for their families. The Jordanian and Palestinian communities, most of whom live in Riyadh or the Red Sea city of Jeddah, number around 400,000 people.

Pioneer of Israeli-PLO contacts dies

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli reserve general Matti Peled, a pioneer of early contacts with the Palestinians and former left wing deputy, died Friday at the age of 72, his family said. President Ezer Weizman paid tribute to a "combatant in all Israel's wars since the creation of the state in 1948." Peled was one of the military chiefs of staff during the 1967 Middle East war. Entering civilian life, he devoted himself to promoting peace from a left-wing stance. In 1975, he set up the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and became one of the first Israelis to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat. He won a seat in parliament in 1984 on a pro-peace list alongside Arab Mohammad Miar. Peled was a strong critic of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and supported the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

Sudan rejects U.N. condemnation

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has rejected a United Nations Human Rights Commission resolution condemning it for abuses including torture, summary executions and slavery. Sudan's Minister of Justice Abdul Aziz Shido described the resolution as illogical, the official press reported on Friday. He said the resolution repeats charges made in earlier resolutions which do not reflect the reality in Sudan. In one of the fiercest condemnations it has ever made, the commission in Geneva on Wednesday expressed "deep concern at continued serious human rights violations in Sudan..." Mr. Shido, who is also the country's attorney general, was quoted by the government-owned Al Sudan Al Hadith newspaper as saying that the resolution is an attempt to create instability in Sudan.

Netanyahu maintains poll lead over Rabin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would be beaten by right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu if elections were held today, according to opinion polls published Friday. Mr. Netanyahu of the Likud party garnered 42 per cent support against 36 per cent for the Yediot Aharanot newspaper. Ten per cent voiced no opinion and 12 per cent said they would abstain. General elections are due by November 1996. Dahaf interviewed 503 Israelis on Tuesday amid allegations that senior Labour ministers set up a multi-million dollar election slush fund with trade union funds. The institute's last poll the previous week gave Mr. Netanyahu 44 per cent over 35 per cent for the 75-year-old prime minister.

Creator of Galil and Uzi guns dies

TEL AVIV (AP) — Yisrael Galili, the man who invented the Galil submachine gun and assisted with the creation of Israel's famed Uzi submachine gun, died Thursday after suffering a heart attack, Israel Television reported. Galili, a resident of the Tel Aviv suburb Givatayim, collapsed while waiting in line for a checkup at a local medical clinic, the television report said. Known in the military by the nickname "father of the rifle," Galili worked for 44 years in Israeli military industries and was considered an expert in developing light weapons, the Israeli news agency Itim reported. In 1973 Galili received Israel's security prize for creating the Galil, named for him, Itim said. He also assisted Israeli Uzi Gal with the creation of the Uzi submachine gun, which has become a mainstay of secret services.

Israeli deputies to look for war dead

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A delegation of Israeli members of parliament will shortly visit Egypt to look for soldiers missing and killed in the 1973 war, officials said Friday. The delegation was invited by Egyptian parliamentarians. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has urged Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to allow similar missions to locate and return Israeli soldiers missing in action. The army could not provide the figures immediately.

Arafat cancels Copenhagen appearance

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Spokesman for the U.N. World Summit on Social Development here confirmed Friday that Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat will not attend the summit which closes Sunday. The Palestinian undersecretary of the social affairs ministry, Thiab Ayyuonuch, also the head of the Palestinian delegation here, told AFP that Mr. Arafat will not attend the summit because "of the tough schedule" resulting from a breakthrough in the peace talks with Israel Thursday. A Palestinian official said earlier in Gaza that Mr. Arafat had sent his apologies to the summit.

Three Jewish settlers disarmed

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police have withdrawn gun permits from three Jewish settlers who were caught on film shooting and wounding three Palestinian stone-throwers in Hebron. Police said the men from the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba had used their guns illegally in December 1993. Soldiers were also filmed standing by watching the settlers firing. A majority of men among the 130,000 West Bank settlers carrying guns saying they fear for their lives.

Mandela to visit Kuwait, Gulf states

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela will visit Kuwait and some Gulf states from March 26 to April 2, his first visit as head of state to the Gulf region, his spokesman said Friday. Spokesman Parks Mankahlana said Mr. Mandela would first visit Kuwait and then other countries in the region, but some details still had to be finalised. Mr. Mankahlana said economic cooperation would be the major focus of the tour.

COLUMN

Marriage in France hit 100-year low

PARIS (AFP) — The number of weddings in France, in decline over the past 20 years, has sunk to the lowest level this century, official statistics showed Friday. A study published by the national statistics institute INSEE said that in 1993 a total 255,200 French couples got married, a 6 per cent drop on the previous year. INSEE added that according to provisional figures for 1994, the number was expected to stabilise at around 254,000. The dip in the number of weddings began in 1973 and slid remorselessly until 1987. After more French couples wedded in 1988, the downwards trend resumed in 1991. The report also noted that the average age of people marrying for the first time was continuing to rise: 29 for men and 27 for women.

China plans Hong Kong epic film for 1997

HONG KONG (AFP) — China is planning an epic film about the 19th century Sino-British Opium War which led to Hong Kong becoming a British colony, a prominent Shanghai director has said. Xie Jin said his Hong Kong Film and Video Co. would have the film released in Hong Kong and overseas in time to mark Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in July 1997, according to local press reports Friday. Proposals and scripts have already been submitted to the central government in Beijing, and Xie said he has received "enthusiastic" support. China is also producing a documentary film on Hong Kong's 150-plus years under colonial rule, but it has yet to discuss with Britain what ceremonies will be staged when the handover takes place. The Opium War of 1840-42 broke out after Beijing's then-imperial government tried to ban imports of Indian opium, which Britain was keen to sell in China to close a huge trade gap. The conflict led to Hong Kong being formally ceded to Britain in 1842 under the Treaty of Nanjing, which Beijing today calls an "unequal treaty."

Pakistan flogged publicly for attempted rape

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (R) — A man convicted by an Islamic court of attempted rape was publicly flogged with a cane Thursday in the Pakistani town of Mingora, witnesses said. Residents said hundreds of people watched Haji Nawab being given 11 strokes of the cane in Pakistan's first public flogging since Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, a critic of harsh Islamic punishments, took office more than 15 months ago. It was also the first flogging in North West Frontier Province since its government decided to enforce Islamic Laws in the mainly tribal Malakand Administrative Division last December. The decision followed a violent campaign for the laws by Islamic militants. Mr. Nawab was sentenced to 10 strokes of the cane after he was found guilty of entering a neighbour's house and trying to rape a woman who resisted and raised alarm. He received 11 strokes because the man wielding the cane gave him an extra hit in panic, the residents said.

U.S. magician plans N. Korea performance

SEOUL (R) — David Copperfield, the world's richest magician, plans a show in Communist North Korea in July on the first anniversary of the death of "great leader" Kim Il-sung, a leading South Korean daily said Friday. The Chosun Ilbo said the North was negotiating with an unnamed U.S. sponsor on ways to transport about 60 tonnes of equipment to the show in Pyongyang. The daily, quoting an unnamed official dealing with the event in South Korea, said the North hoped the Seoul government would allow the equipment to be transported via the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom. The show is expected to be held either on July 8 or July 9, the daily said. North Korea's founding father Kim Il-Sung died on July 8 last year.